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BY

JOHN BIGELOW

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MOLINOS THE QUIETIST

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press, to be brought to his apartment, which chanced to be over that occupied by the Master of the Sacred Palace, and in due time set his press to work. The noise it made was so unusual, that it was not long in attracting attention. The offense was, of course, detected and reported to the Pope,[1] and orders immediately issued for Albertini and his theology to quit Rome. The Cardinal Secretary of State, however, thinking that nothing more would probably be heard of the press or of its proprietor, did not press the execution of the Pope's orders. While thus lingering at sufferance in Rome, and on one of the hottest days of August in the year of grace, 1685, Albertini observed a squad of the pontifical police taking possession of the entry to his domicil. He not unnaturally hurried to the conclusion that they were in quest of him. Though at the moment of the discovery stripped to his shirt and drawers, he had such a wholesome dread of a Roman prison that, without stopping to perfect his toilet, he fled up the stairs, crawled out on the roof, and took refuge in the first opening that offered him a chance of escape or concealment. It proved to conduct to the interior of a convent of *Repenties*—a sort of closed house appropriated to the seclusion of women of equivocal characters, *donne male maritate*. Now it so happened that among the recent additions to this frail circle was a damsel of great

[1] Clement X., elected 1670, died 1676.

beauty,

beauty,—*una bellissima*, as she was styled by the chronicler of this incident,—with whom Albertini had a slight acquaintance. The inmates of the house, seeing a man descending among them in such guise, and in defiance of the terrible excommunications always impending over male intruders, took it for granted that it was the *bellissima* who had attracted him. Whether impelled by jealousy or consternation,—for on this point history is silent,—they rang the convent bell, and in a moment poor Albertini, in his hasty toilet, was surrounded by a throng of curious and very noisy, not to say indignant, women. In spite of his vehement protestations that he meant no mischief, it was some time before the alarm of the caged birds could be quieted. They finally accepted his explanations, however, and allowed him to return to his quarters, which he thought it prudent to exchange without unnecessary delay for others outside of the Roman territory,[1] and beyond the range of the papal police.

Now it so happened that the sbirri who so frightened Father Albertini from his proprieties were not in pursuit of him at all, but of a Spanish priest who stood charged with the grave and, in the city of the Cæsars, far less tolerable crime of heresy, and who chanced to occupy an apartment immediately opposite to his own. This alleged heretic was Michel de Molinos, a gentleman of Spanish extraction, who was just then one

[1] *Correspondance inédite de Mabillon et de Montfaucon avec l'Italie*, v. i., p. 107.

of

of the greatest ecclesiastical lions in the papal dominions, and who had been actively engaged for many years at Rome in sowing the seeds of one of the most formidable schisms that ever disturbed the peace of the Latin church—a schism which, only a few years later, was to array against each other, in open and bitter hostility, the two most illustrious prelates of the Gallican church, and which twice seriously threatened to interrupt the friendly relations of the French and pontifical governments.

Molinos was of a noble Spanish family of Minozzi, in the diocese of Saragossa, in Aragon, where he was born December 21, 1627. He took his theological degree at Coimbra, and, after a career of some distinction in his own country, went to Rome, where he speedily acquired a wonderful popularity as a spiritual director. In 1675 he published a little book entitled *Il Guida Spirituale.*[1] The substance of its teachings was that

[1] *Il Guida Spirituale* was first printed at Rome, in Italian, in 1675; it was afterward published in Spanish at Madrid in 1676, then at Saragossa in 1677, and then in Seville in 1685. *Bernino, Hist. di Tutte l'Heresie*, v. 4. This work went through twenty editions in different languages in the space of six years, 1674–1680. An English translation appeared in 1699 without any publisher's imprint, or even the place of its publication, entitled, "*The Spiritual Guide which disentangles the soul, and brings it by the inward way to the getting of perfect contemplation and the rich treasure of internal peace. Written by Dr. Michel Molinos, priest. Translated from the Italian copy.*"

the

"The Divine Majesty knows very well that it is not by the means of one's own ratiocination or industry that a soul draws near to Him and understands the divine truths, but rather by silent and humble resignation. The patriarch Noah gave a great instance of this, who, after he had been by all men reckoned a fool, floating in the middle of a raging sea wherewith the whole world was overflowed, without sails or oars, and environed by wild beasts that were shut up in the ark, walked by faith alone, not knowing nor understanding what God had a mind to do with him."[1] "Consider the blinded beast that turns the wheel of the mill, which, though it see not, neither know what it does, yet does a great work in grinding the corn; and although it taste not of it, yet its master receives the fruit and tastes of the same. Who would not think, during so long a time that the seed lies in the earth, but that it were lost? Yet afterwards it is seen to spring up, grow, and multiply. God does the same with the soul when He deprives it of consideration and ratiocination. Whilst it thinks it does nothing and is, in a manner, undone, in times it comes to itself again, improved, disengaged, and perfect, having never hoped for so much favor."[2] Prayer he calls the sword of the Spirit,—prayer frequent and prolonged. "It concerns thee only," he adds, "to prepare thy heart

[1] *The Spiritual Guide*, p. 11. Our citations are made from the English version of 1699. [2] *The Spiritual Guide*, p. 12.

like

like clean paper wherein the Divine Wisdom may imprint characters to His own liking."

Those who endeavor to acquire virtues by much abstinence, maceration of the body, mortification of the senses, rigorous penances, wearing sack-cloth, chastising the flesh by discipline, going in quest of sensible affections and fervent sentiments, thinking to find God in them, such Molinos considered were in what he termed the external way, the way of beginners, which, though to such it might be useful, never would conduct them to perfection, "nor so much as one step towards it, as experience shows in many, who, after fifty years of this external exercise, are void of God, and full of themselves (of spiritual pride), having nothing of a spiritual man but the name."[1]

"The truly spiritual men, on the other hand, are those whom the Lord, in his infinite mercy, has called from that outward way in which they had been wont to exercise themselves; who had retired into the interior part of their souls; who had resigned themselves into the hand of God, totally putting off and forgetting themselves, and always going with an elevated spirit to the presence of the Lord, by means of pure faith, without image, form, or figure, but with great assurance founded in tranquillity and rest internal. These blessed and sublimated souls take no pleasure in anything of the world, but in contempt of it, in being alone, for-

[1] *The Spiritual Guide*, p. 77.

saken

saken and forgotten by everybody, keeping always in their hearts a great lowliness and contempt of themselves; always humbled in the depths of their own unworthiness and vileness. In the same manner they are always quiet, serene, and even-minded, whether under extraordinary graces and favor, or under the most rigorous and bitter torments. No news makes them afraid. No success makes them glad. Tribulations never disturb them, nor the interior, continual Divine communations make them vain and conceited; they always remain full of holy and filial fear, in a wonderful peace, constancy, and serenity."[1]

"The Lord," he says, "has repose nowhere but in quiet souls, and in those in which the fire of tribulation and temptation hath burned up the dregs of passions, and with the bitter water of afflictions hath washed off the filthy spots of inordinate appetites; in a word, this Lord reposes only where quiet reigns and self-love is banished."[2] * * *

"Afflict not thyself too much, and with inquietude, because these sharp martyrdoms may continue; persevere in humility, and go not out of thyself to seek aid; for all thy good consists in being silent, suffering and holding patience with rest and resignation; then wilt thou find the Divine Strength to overcome so hard a warfare. He is within thee that fighteth for thee; and He is Strength itself."[3] * * *

[1] *The Spiritual Guide*, p. 76–80. [2] *The Spiritual Guide*, p. 91.
[3] *The Spiritual Guide*, p. 112–113.

"By

"By the way of nothing thou must come to lose thyself in God (which is the last degree of perfection), and happy wilt thou be if thou canst so lose thyself. In this same shop of nothing, simplicity is made, interior and infused recollection is possessed, quiet is obtained, and the heart is cleansed from all imperfection."[1]

There is nothing in these doctrines of passivity which had not been taught by many of the most highly esteemed

[1] *The Spiritual Guide*, p. 157.

La Bruyère left behind him a little treatise, entitled *Dialogues sur le Quiétisme*, now deservedly forgotten. The only thing in it worthy of its author's wit is a caricature of this doctrine of quiet and passivity, in a supposed quietistic version of the Lord's Prayer. It is supposed to be brought by a penitent to the director under whose instruction she has been trained, and whose approval of it is requested.

Director: Speak, my child; your motive is praiseworthy.

Penitent: Listen, now, to my composition.

Director: I am attentive.

Penitent: O God, who art no more in Heaven than on Earth or in Hell, who art everywhere, I neither wish nor desire your name to be sanctified. You know what is suitable for us, and if You wish it to be it will be without my wishing or desiring it; whether Your Kingdom comes or not is to me indifferent. Neither do I ask that Your will be done on Earth as it is done in Heaven. It will be done in spite of my wishes, and it is for me to be resigned. Give us all our daily bread which is Your grace, or do not give it; I neither desire to have it or to be deprived of it. So if You pardon my crimes as I have pardoned those who have wronged me, so much the better. If, on the other hand, You punish me by damnation, still so much the better, since such is Your will.

esteemed mystical writers of the Church, by St. Bonaventura, St. Theresa, John of the Cross, the Baroness de Chantal, St. Francis de Sales, and others, some of whom indeed had been canonized as saints.[1] The doctrines were presented in a simple and unaffected style, and the book, as well as its author, acquired a prompt and extraordinary popularity. *The Spiritual Guide* received

Finally, my God, I am too entirely abandoned to Your will to ask You to deliver me from temptations and from evil.—*Dialogues Posthumes du Sieur de la Bruyère sur le Quiétisme*, p. 193.

[1] Corbinelli, the private secretary of Marie de Medicis, and one of the correspondents of Madame de Sévigné, in a letter dated Oct. 24, 1687, says:

"I am now occupied with the propositions of Molinos, and as I have been assured that they are in conformity with the teachings of St. Theresa and other mystics, I have read the *Château de l'Ame* and her other works, and the result is that I have met there almost all the doctrines of the condemned priest."—*Lettres de Madame de Sévigné, de sa famille et de ses amis*. 1822. Vol. 8, p. 414.

A few weeks later, Nov. 24, 1687, Corbinelli writes again:

"I still passionately love jurisprudence, but that has not prevented my reading all the works of St. Theresa, in which, I think, I have found all the propositions of Molinos. I have made a collection of Christian or mystic maxims of this saint, and have conversed about them with some very, very learned Cartesians, who all believe that the equivocal expressions which lean most to paradox bring their authors to the stake according as their judges are more or less ignorant. Now, it is known for certain that those who compose the tribunal of the Inquisition are ignorant in a supreme degree. Cardinal Petrucci waits for them under the elm, and they dare not attack him, the

the formal approbation of five famous doctors, four of them Inquisitors and one a Jesuit, and within six years passed through twenty editions, in most European tongues.

Its author's acquaintance and friendship was sought by people in the greatest credit, not only at Rome, but

because he has talent and learning, joined to great dignity.[1] St. Francis of Sales said the good pleasure of God is the sovereign object of the indifferent soul, so that it would prefer Hell if that were God's will, than Paradise without the will of God. It would even prefer Hell to Paradise, if it knew that such was only a little more the good pleasure of God, that is, as he explains himself, if his damnation was a little more agreeable to God than his salvation.

The Baroness Chantal, a disciple of St. Francis, said:

"If it please God to make my abode in the hells, I will be content with it."

A. de Foligny said: "Though I should be damned, I would never cease repenting and stripping myself of everything for the love of God. If, O my God, You must cast me into hell, delay no longer."

Catherine of Sienna: "If it were possible to feel all the torments of the demons and of damned souls, nevertheless I could never call them torments, so much happiness would pure love yield me."

The Mystics sustained these paradoxes upon Biblical authority, quoting St. Paul *(Rom. 9:3)* who says: "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh," and Moses *(Exodus, ch. 32)*, who says to the Lord, "Yet now if Thou wilt, forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written."

[1] In this Corbinelli was unfortunately mistaken. Petrucci was not only compelled by the Inquisition to abjure, but was forbidden to reside within his bishopric, which he finally resigned.

in

in other parts of Europe by correspondence. Among his followers were three fathers of the Oratoire, who soon afterwards received cardinal's hats, and even the popes who successively occupied the pontifical chair during his residence in Rome took particular notice of him. The Cardinal Odescalchi was no sooner raised to the pontificate as Innocent XI., than he provided Molinos with lodgings at the Vatican, and such was his esteem for him that he is said to have formed the purpose of making him a cardinal, and to have actually selected him for a time as his spiritual director.[1]

With such evidences of protection in high quarters, and with so much in his theology of unworldliness and devoutness to commend it to the understandings as well as to the hearts of the faithful, the popularity of Molinos grew apace. He seemed to them another St. Paul, sent to emancipate them from the thrall of image-manufacturers and an idolatrous and costly ceremonial; to bring them nearer to God and farther from priestcraft and obscurantism. He was neither greedy nor ambitious. He sought no place, nor would he accept any,—not even a cardinal's hat. A priest at Rome without ambition was such an unusual phe-

[1] *Journal de M. l'Abbé Dorsanne, etc., contenant l'histoire et les anecdotes de ce que s'est passé de plus intéressant, à Rome et en France, dans l'affaire de la Constitution Unigenitus,* Vol. 1, p. 20. *Madame Guyon; sa vie, sa doctrine, et son influence, par L. Guerrier.* Paris, 1881, p. 131.

nomenon

nomenon that it alone would have sufficed to make him famous. Every one who was sincerely devout, or who wished to be thought so, adopted "the Method of Molinos," and many who wished promotion at Rome saw no surer nor speedier way to it than to establish good relations with him and his friends. Queen Christine, of Sweden, then the lioness of Rome, was under his direction, and made his gifts and piety a favorite theme of her extensive correspondence. Cardinal d'Estrées, who represented Louis XIV. and his government at the pontifical court, and who was one of the most accomplished courtiers of his time, felt it to be worth his while to identify himself with the new departure, and to put Molinos in correspondence with important people in France. He even went so far as to procure the translation into the Italian tongue of a book written a few years before *The Spiritual Guide* by a blind French clergyman,[1] favoring the doctrines of Quietism. About the same time a Father Petrucci wrote many letters and one or more treatises in favor of the contemplative life as taught by Molinos, for the special

[1] The title of this book was *Orazione di Pure Fede*. It was written in French, and originally published in France, with the approbation of some of the doctors of the Sorbonne and of Cardinal Bona, in 1669. The Italian translation was published at Venice in 1675. It finally fell under the censure of the Inquisition, and was condemned by Pope Innocent XI., in common with many other books savoring of Quietism, in 1688.

edification

edification of nuns. Bishop Gilbert Burnet, who chanced to be in Italy during the winter of 1685, wrote home "that the new Method of Molinos doth so much prevail at Naples that it is believed he hath above 20,000 followers in the city. He hath writ a book which is intitled *Il Guida Spirituale*, which is a short abstract of the Mystical Divinity; the substance of the whole is reduced to this, that, in our prayers and other devotions, the best methods are to retire the mind from all gross images, and so to form an act of Faith, and thereby to present ourselves before God, and then to sink into a silence and cessation of new acts, and to let God act upon us, and so to follow his conduct. This way he prefers to the multiplication of many new acts and different forms of devotion, and he makes small account of corporal austerities, and reduces all the exercises of religion to this simplicity of mind. He thinks this is not only to be proposed to such as live in religious houses, but even to secular persons, and by this he hath proposed a great reformation of men's minds and manners. He hath many priests in Italy, but chiefly in Naples, that dispose those who confess themselves to them to follow his methods. The Jesuits have set themselves much against this conduct as foreseeing it may weaken the empire that superstition hath over the minds of the people; that it may make religion become a more plain and simple thing, and may also open the door to enthusiasms. They also pretend that his conduct is factious and seditious; that

that this may breed a schism in the Church. And because he saith in some places of his book that the mind may rise up to such simplicity in its acts that it may rise in some of its devotions to God immediately, without contemplating the humanity of Christ, they have accused him as intending to lay aside the doctrine of Christ's humanity, tho' it is plain that he speaks only of the purity of some single acts. Upon all those heads they have set themselves much against Molinos, and they have also pretended that some of his disciples have infused it into their penitents that they may go and communicate as they find themselves disposed without going first to confession, which they thought weakened much the yoke by which the priests subdue the consciences of the people to their conduct. Yet he was much supported, both in the kingdom of Naples and Sicily. He hath also many friends and followers at Rome. So the Jesuits, as a provincial of the Order assured me, finding they could not ruin him by their own force, got a great king, that is now extremely in the interests of their Order, to interpose, and to represent to the Pope the danger of such innovations. It is certain the Pope understands the matter very little, and that he is possessed of a great opinion of Molinos' sanctity; yet, upon the complaints of some cardinals that seconded the zeal of that king, he and some of his followers were clapt into the Inquisition, where they have been now some months, but still they are well used, which is believed to flow from the

the good opinion that the Pope hath of him, who saith still that 'he may err, yet he is still a good man.'"[1]

[1] Some letters containing the account of what seemed most remarkable in Switzerland, Italy, etc., written by G. Burnet, D. D., to T. H. R. B., etc. Amsterdam, 1686. Letter 4.

CHAPTER II.

The Jesuits combine against Molinos — Father Segneri enters the field against the Quietists — Molinos imprisoned by the Inquisition.

THE secret of the extraordinary popularity of Molinos was betrayed by some of its inconvenient consequences. While his disciples became usually more strict in their manner of life, more retired, more devout and indifferent to the world, they showed a corresponding indifference to the exterior rites of the church; they were seen less frequently at mass, made little account of corporeal austerities, chaplets, and relics, neglected the confessional and pilgrimages, and were growing less lavish in their expenditures for masses for their deceased friends and kindred.

This was a state of things which could not be permitted to go on indefinitely. If the external acts of devotion were to be slighted; if transgressors were to go directly to their Maker with their budget of sins for forgiveness or indulgences, and if they had no occasion to leave their rooms to ask intercession for the deliverance

ance of the souls of their deceased relatives from purgatory; if the Confessional with its perquisites and its precious secrets was to be closed, how was the Church to be supported; how were they to know the secrets of foreign cabinets; who were to supply the cardinals with their princely revenues; who build costly temples; how support the armies of the Pope and the Inquisition? This was a practical aspect of the situation, which seems first to have presented itself to the Jesuits, who were then as now the driving-wheel of the Roman Curia. They saw at once that Quietism or Romanism must go to the wall; that there was not room in Europe for both; and they were not long in deciding, so far as it depended upon them, which should stay and which should go. They employed all the power and artifice of the Order to alarm foreign sovereigns, and induce them to believe it their duty to interfere at Rome in behalf of the Church, whose interests were being compromised by Molinos; they branded the followers of the Spanish mystic with bad names, the readiest weapon of malevolence, and set to work systematically to denounce him and his doctrine, in official as well as private correspondence, and through the press. In the selection of the person who was to set their squadrons in the field, they showed great sagacity.

Father Paul Segneri[1] was then the foremost

[1] Father Segneri was born in Nettuno, on the 21st of March, 1624; commenced his novitiate with the Jesuits in his thirteenth year; was ordained priest at twenty-nine; was then preacher

preacher among the Jesuits in Italy. In the midst of his labors as a missionary in the northern part of Italy, he received from his chief at Rome a bundle of Quietistic books, with directions to prepare an antidote to them. In 1680, and just five years after *Il Guida Spirituale* first appeared, Father Segneri wrote a small volume at Florence, entitled "*Concordia tra la fatica e la Quiete*" (Harmony between effort and Quiet, or works and faith).

Father Segneri was much too discreet in his work to attempt to depreciate the contemplative life. On the contrary, he began by artfully magnifying it, and censuring those who would make light of it, but he insisted that few were capable of leading it, and none should aspire to it but those specially called to it by God. "These spiritual fathers," he said, "expose souls to much risk. They should consider that out of so many people Moses only was called into the thick darkness where God was."[1] "As the waters go down from the mountains by the valleys," or middle way (*Psalms*, 104–8), so the way of the saints is; now meditation, now contemplation, as they shall find most expedient."

sent to teach in one of the Jesuit schools at Pestoia, where he remained until 1665, when he commenced mission work in the northern part of Italy, and continued there till 1692. The fruits of his labors, so far as they could be preserved by the press, are embodied in eleven octavo volumes of sermons, of so much merit that they still hold a respectable place in the religious literature of the Latin Church.

[1] *Concordia tra fatica e Quiete*, p. 9.

expedient." He insists that the state of contemplation can never be a fixed or permanent state, and objects therefore to closing the middle way, as some modern writers have proposed, who teach that, once called by God to Contemplation, we should never return to Meditation.

Segneri does not mention Molinos, nor any other Quietist by name, in this book, but throughout seems anxious to have his controversy, if possible, not with them, only with their doctrines, and to make no more bad blood than was necessary. The tenderness with which the Quietists are approached by Segneri shows to what extent their power was recognized at Rome.

But, cautious and forbearing as he was, Father Segneri was not long in discovering that he had been putting his hand into a hornet's nest. His biographer tells us that no one would believe what a mass of anonymous letters he received, teeming with abuse and fearful threats.

The same year that the *Concordia* was written, Segneri published a "letter in reply to the exceptions which a champion of the modern Quietists has taken to an assailant of their method of prayer."

These writings so exasperated the Quietists that, in a few short months, its author found himself, instead of Molinos, on the defensive. Complaints against the *Concordia* were also lodged at the Inquisition, and its author did not know how soon it, as well as himself, might be burned for heresy. It had become for Segneri

a

a struggle for life, and, laying aside all other cares, he put forth his whole strength in making good all he had said against the doctrines of the Quietists, in a work entitled *A Bundle of Doubts about Prayers of Pure Faith, of Faith Alone, of Simple Faith, or of Quiet, with their Solutions, for a Soul Desirous of not Missing the True Method of Prayer.* This also was written as a reply to Malvalle's *Prayer of Pure Faith*, the book already alluded to, which Cardinal d'Estrées had, in his early zeal for Molinos, caused to be translated into Italian. It was accompanied by a petition or *supplica* addressed to Pope Innocent XI., in behalf of the book entitled *La Concordia tra la Fatica e la Quiete nell' Orazione*, which the followers of Molinos "are trying to have condemned by the Holy Office," and dated Florence, November 28, 1681.

This petition begins by recapitulating some of the heretical doctrines during the previous holy year which had been permitted to circulate among the faithful, and especially the doctrine that "those who meditate do not imitate Christ; that those who meditate do not adore God in spirit and in truth;[1] that those who meditate bury their talent of faith in an abyss of reasonings; that, while everything was created to be in the image of God, those who meditate leave God aside, and retain only the image; that he who meditates is an unregenerate, a Nathaniel who stands under

[1] The title of this book was *The Easy Method in the form of a Dialogue to Exalt the Soul to Contemplation.*

the

the tree of life considering the roots, branches, and leaves, but never tasting its fruit," and so on. He then sets forth at some length the objections to this sort of theology, and closes with the following appeal:

"I, nevertheless, most Holy Father, considering one day these disorders and knowing by my own observation the injury which they have occasioned and continue to occasion to souls, was overtaken by an irresistible impulse, which appeared to me to come from God, and inflamed me to write hastily a little book, in which I have confuted these errors, and have entitled it *Concordia tra la fatica la Quiete nell' Orazione*, to show that in these things we ought not to leave God alone to work in us, but that we ought also to do our part according to the various states in which we may be placed. This little book so much displeased the author assailed, though not named by me, that there reached me immediately after from Rome an anonymous letter, most offensive in tone, which assured me as a certainty that the book should be prohibited. I have remarked the effects of this and other letters which succeeded it, in the fierce tempest which the adversaries have raised to verify what they have written, and under the special pretext that my book is wanting in charity. This, I know, cannot be maintained, since I condemn no one, but only their sayings, and since to the charity due to any individual whatever there is a greater charity due to the universal Christian Church, which charity I exhibit in the exposures

ures given in my little book of the dangers liable to result from the incautious reading of these authors. I therefore pray your Holiness to graciously consent that Father Gian Paola Oliva, my general, may name some persons to speak in my behalf, as I am absent from Rome, and there show how true is what I have said in this little book, which on my knees I burn to lay at your feet, not out of solicitude for my personal fame, but, engaged as I have been for seventeen years in missions to so many important dioceses, it seems to me that it must impair my authority and credit among the people to know that my teachings had incurred the solemn censure of the Inquisition. Besides which, to condemn my book is indirectly to approve of the doctrines I have assailed. Wherefore, I pray your Holiness, by your love of the Holy Church, to have my book examined with the aid of some persons to be assigned to speak in my behalf, because I am sure you will see how much these doctrines abound not only in absurdity but mischief."

The books of Segneri, and those of Molinos and Petrucci, were examined by the Inquisition. The latter two appeared in person. Segneri, it may be inferred from the foregoing *supplica*, did not appear. Indeed, the sympathy of Rome was so strongly with the Molinos party at that time, that he probably deemed it prudent not to put himself within the jurisdiction of the Holy Office.

After a protracted and tedious investigation, Molinos

nos and Petrucci succeeded so effectually in justifying themselves that their books were approved, while those of Segneri were censured as scandalous and heretical, and put into the index with two or three books writ against Quietism. It was soon after this decision that Petrucci was made a bishop, a significant indication of the sympathies of the Pope, from which the Molinos party derived fresh courage and strength.[1]

While this attack was making in the north, another was made in the south. In the beginning of the year 1682, the Cardinal Caraccioli makes the growth of Quietism in Naples the subject of serious representations to the Pope, by which, as he expresses himself, "the devil has transformed himself into an angel of light." He complained that some of the victims of this new faith "have not been able to bring themselves to say the holy rosary nor even to make the sign of the cross, saying that they could not and would not do it, nor recite any vocal prayer, because they were dead in the presence of God, and these exterior acts were of no service." He tells of "others in this prayer of quietude,

[1] The Jesuits, finding the Pope so favorable to their adversaries, had prayers put up in their monasteries *for his conversion* to Romanism.—*Considérations sur les Affaires de l'Eglise.*

La Fontaine had his joke on this subject at the expense of the Pope:

J'ai là dessus un conte à faire;
L'autre jour touchant cette affaire,
Le Chevalier de Sillery,
En parlant de ce pape ci
Souhaitant, pour la paix publique;
Qu'il se fût rendu Catholique
Et le Roi Jaques Huguenot,
Je trouve assez bon ce bon mot.

when

when the images of the saints, and even of the Lord Jesus Christ, present themselves to their imagination, hasten to drive them away with a shake of the head, because, they say, they separate them from God. Their blindness is so great that one of them took it into his head one day to throw down a crucifix because it prevented him from uniting himself with God, and made him lose the Divine presence." The cardinal also complains of the frequent use of the communion, even among the married laity, as another evidence of heretical pravity.[1] There is not a word, however, in this letter to imply anything otherwise irregular in the lives and general deportment of the inculpated devotees.

Despairing of bringing the Pope to take ground against Molinos by any of the considerations they could present, the Jesuits appealed to Louis XIV., with whom their Order was then all-powerful. To do their will was the price he was required to pay for the license they gave him to violate any or all the commands of the Decalogue. To be esteemed more Catholic than the Pope, and more fastidious about keeping the purity of the faith than the Holy Office itself, was a reputation worth having for a monarch who was always trying to secure the advantages of religion without any of its privations, and the respect of his subjects without deserving it. Père la Chaise, the King's confessor, made the King believe that nothing he could do would contribute so much to ensure all

[1] Appendix A.

these

these results as to bring about the condemnation of Molinos, his disciples, and doctrines. Next to the pleasure of living without any religion himself, Louis XIV. most enjoyed persecuting religion into other people. He yielded to the specious arguments of his wily confessor, and gave orders to Cardinal d'Estrées to denounce Molinos to the Holy Office, and to press his condemnation with the utmost vigor.[1] To most men occupying the attitude which d'Estrées had taken towards Molinos and his doctrines, these orders from Versailles would have been embarrassing. But d'Estrées was a courtier,

[1] A correspondent of the period, writing from Versailles, August 3, 1686, thus refers to the French influence in effecting the disgrace of Molinos: "They report from Rome the arrest of many obstinate Quietists. It is the King who made the Cardinal d'Estrées speak of it last year to the Pope, and who, by his remonstrances, obliged His Holiness to try Molinos, their head, for whom it is certain the Pope had a particular esteem. He had even given a bishoprick to Petrucci, who has written pretty much the same things as Molinos, and who is regarded at Rome as the first of his disciples. They pretend that the Pope would have scarcely permitted him to be brought to trial if the King, extending his zeal against hereticks beyond the limits of his own states, had not ordered Cardinal d'Estrées to expose to him the necessity of opposing such a fascinating heresy. It was because of these remonstrances that the congregation of the Holy Office labored the past year on the trial of Molinos. The Cardinal d'Estrées, who is one of them, exposed, with much science and zeal, what is dangerous in the doctrine, and with such success that the congregation put Molinos and some of his sectaries in prison."

courtier, and he enjoyed an official residence at Rome extremely. Before the cock could crow thrice, he was ready to burn Molinos. He presented himself promptly at the Vatican to testify to the Pope the astonishment of his sovereign that while he, the eldest son of the Church, was using all his power to purge his kingdom of the scourge of heresy, His Holiness was extending the hospitalities of the Vatican to a corrupter of souls, a notorious scoffer of the practices and ceremonies of the Church.

Innocent XI. sent the ambassador to the Holy Office with his master's complaint. D'Estrées presented himself before the Inquisitors with extracts from the book of Molinos, which, as he insisted, concealed mysteries of wickedness which Molinos should be required to explain. The astonished Inquisitors asked the cardinal-ambassador how it happened that he had been so long the intimate friend of so bad a man. The cardinal-ambassador had the effrontery to reply that it was only a pious fraud, which he had permitted himself to perpetrate that he might the better penetrate the inmost thought of the pernicious mystic. And to shut off all discussion, he added that in doing this he had merely conformed to the rules and usages of the Holy Office.[1]

The Inquisitors comprehended that with such a man to deal with, it was necessary to act, not to debate.

[1] *Madame Guyon; sa vie, sa doctrine, et son influence*, p. 137.

The

The Jesuits, strengthened by such a formidable reënforcement, cried "heresy" louder than ever, and as they had a controlling influence at the Holy Office, they finally succeeded, in 1685, in procuring a new order for the arrest of Molinos. It was the execution of this order which led to the ridiculous adventure of Father Albertini with the *Male Maritate* before referred to. Molinos was sent to the prisons of the Inquisition, and, according to the usage of that institution, all his papers were seized to be searched for evidence that would compromise him, and all his property placed under seal to defray the expenses of his confinement and trial.[1]

[1] The expenses of the Inquisition were entirely defrayed by the fines and confiscations of condemned heretics. When the arrest was made, all the property of the suspected heretic was seized, and if, as rarely happened, he was found innocent, only that portion of his property was restored to him that remained after all the costs of his arrest, trial, and detention had been paid. The cost to the accused, whether innocent or guilty, was the same up to the end of the investigation. It is needless to say that, under such a system, few upon whom the officers of the Inquisition once laid their hands were found innocent, especially if they had any property, were in possession of any troublesome secrets, or had any faculty and inclination to propagute opinions not in harmony with the policy and interests of the Roman government. Some 12,000 letters were found in his escritoire, and about 4,000 scudi, the joint fruits of his extensive spiritual commerce. —*Historia di Tutte l'Heresie, descritta da Domenico Bernino*, v. 4, p. 714.

CHAPTER III.

Queen Christine, of Sweden, renounces her crown and her religion — Enters the Roman Church — Takes Molinos for her spiritual director.

AMONG other eminent personages who had been captivated by the doctrines of Molinos, and led to take a strong personal interest in his fortunes, was the eccentric Christine, ex-Queen of Sweden, to whose friendly offices he was now greatly beholden.

Christine was one year older than Molinos. She was the daughter of the great Gustavus, whose premature death at Lutzen raised her to the throne of Sweden when only six years of age. Maturing early, in her eighteenth year she dismissed the regency by which the government had been conducted, and assumed, not only in name but in fact, the full duties of sovereignty. Her devotion to the public business and her influence in the councils were a theme on which all the foreign representatives at her court loved to dwell. She was, withal, renowned for her beauty, and, probably, the most accomplished woman of her years

years that ever sat upon a throne. The savans of her own and foreign countries vied with each other in writing panegyrics on her genius. Her biographer counted up two hundred of them.

"At the age of fourteen,"[1] she has told us, "I knew all the languages, all the sciences, and all the accomplishments that they attempted to teach me. But since that time I have learned many others without the help of any master, and it is certain that I never had a master for learning either German, French, Italian, or Spanish."[2] With Vossius she read the most important Greek authors of antiquity, and even the fathers of the Church were not suffered to remain unknown to her. It was, doubtless, from him, too, that she early acquired the disastrous habit of walking by sight and not by faith in matters of religion.[3] Heinsius stocked her library with choice books and costly manuscripts from Italy. Descartes was in the habit of meeting her every morning at five o'clock, to talk philosophy and to hear her trace the points of resemblance between his teachings and those of Plato. "If I tell you," says Naudé, "that her genius is altogether extraordinary, I shall utter no falsehood,

[1] *La Vie de Christine, écrite par elleméme.*

[2] So far as the Queen's French is concerned, no one who has read any of her compositions in that language will be disposed to gainsay this latter statement.

[3] It was of Vossius that Charles II. of England wittily said that "He believed everything but the Bible."

for

for she has seen everything, she has read everything, she knows everything."[1] It was infinitely to her credit, too, that, wiser than the wise men of her generation, she anticipated the judgment of posterity upon Grotius, and gave to him her confidence and protection, when to do so was to provoke the formidable malice of Richelieu. With all her attractions, she withstood all the importunities of her suitors and counsellors to marry. "I should, no doubt, have married," she says, farther on in her autobiography, "if I had not felt myself possessed of the strength to dispense with the pleasures of domestic life."[2] The obligations that she might have felt to form a matrimonial alliance for the sake of her country she believed herself to have removed by settling the succession to the crown, with the consent of the Estates, upon her cousin Charles Gustavus, who had been one of the many unsuccessful suitors for her hand.

In both these eccentric determinations, Christine was influenced, if not controlled, by a purpose which had long been germinating in her mind, to change her religion. When only nine years of age, hearing for the first time the doctrines of the Catholic faith expounded to her, and, among other things, that the unmarried state was considered meritorious in that church, she exclaimed, "Ah, how fine that is; I will be of that religion." Unhappily, the religion in which

[1] Naudé à Gassendi, Oct. 19, 1652.

[2] *La Vie de Christine, écrite par elleméme.*

she

she was brought up was to one in her position more an affair of state than of conviction. Unhappily, too, it was administered as an affair of state. The long harangues to which she was required to listen bored her. So did the heavy and unsympathetic companionship of her country-people. To escape them she surrounded herself with the most illustrious citizens of foreign lands whom she could persuade to reside at her capital. Among those whose society proved especially agreeable to her, in the frame of mind to which events had brought her, was the confessor of the Portuguese minister at her court, Macedo, a Jesuit priest. The minister spoke no language but Portuguese, and Macedo acted both as his interpreter and as his priestly adviser everywhere. The Queen found pleasure in leading Macedo to talk on religious topics, while the minister was flattering himself that they were deep in the mysteries of Portuguese politics. Thus, secure from suspicion by the presence of a third person, though that person knew nothing of what was passing, she confided to Macedo the perilous secret of her real or pretended religious doubts and troubles. We say pretended, because it can never be known how far this adventure, which was to conduct her to such serious results, originated in a taste for intrigue, and how far in the agitation of her conscience. Suddenly Macedo disappeared from Stockholm. The Queen pretended to take his departure in great dudgeon, and sent in pursuit of him with orders to bring him

him back. Of course he was not taken. She had actually sent him to Rome to explain her troubles and dispositions to the general of the Jesuits, and to ask that one or more of the most trusty members of the Order be sent to consult with her as to the best means of extricating herself from the web of obstacles which circumstances had woven around her, to a repudiation of the religion of her fathers, and to her entering the Latin communion.

Precisely at the time of Macedo's disappearance, Christine made known to the Estates her intention to abdicate, saying, of course, nothing of her intention to change her religion. Two Jesuits, named respectively Molinos and Casati, were promptly despatched from Rome to superintend, not so much her conversion as her abjuration. That her purpose to enter the Latin communion was fixed before Macedo was sent to Rome for reënforcements, there is no doubt. In the first paragraph of the report which Casati makes of his mission to Pope Alexander, he says: "In obedience to the wishes of your holiness for a short memorial of what passed, *in regard to the Queen's resolution to renounce her kingdom for the purpose of becoming Catholic*, I am compelled to go back a step that I may explain the cause thereof in conformity with statements from the mouth of the Queen herself," etc. This confirms what is sufficiently disclosed by her notification to the Estates of her intention to abdicate, simultaneously with Macedo's departure for

for Rome. The account which Casati gives of his first reception by the Queen farther betrays the same foregone conclusion.

"* * * While the Queen was at supper, two gentlemen complained that it was very cold, and the general reproached them, declaring that two Italians who had come thither in his company had shown no such fear of cold. The Queen, hearing this contest and inquiring the cause of their contending, was told that two Italians were coming. She asked if they were musicians; but the general replying that they were two gentlemen travelling to see the country, her Majesty said that she would by all means like to see them. We were immediately informed of all this, and advised to go to court on the following day. On the following morning we were accordingly conducted thither by Signor Zaccaria Grimani, a Venetian noble, who introduced us to pay our respects to Count Magnus de la Gardie, her Majesty's prime minister, that through him we might obtain the honor of kissing the hand of her Majesty. He received us with much courtesy, and assured us that her Majesty would have much pleasure in seeing us. It was then the hour of dinner, and her Majesty came out into the 'Vierkant,' when we were directed to approach her Majesty, and having kissed her hand, we made her a short compliment in Italian (for so she had commanded, although she had caused us to be informed that she would reply in French, since

since she understood it), suitable to the character we had assumed, and she replied with the utmost urbanity. Immediately afterwards, the marshal of the court, and with him all the other gentlemen, set forward towards the hall wherein the table was laid for dinner, and I found myself immediately before the Queen. She, who during the night had thought over the matter of the two Italians, and reflecting that it was precisely the end of February, about which time it had been written to her from Rome that we should arrive, had begun to suspect that we were the persons whom she was looking for: thus, when we were but little distant from the door, and that nearly all the company had gone out of the 'Vierkant,' she said to me in a low voice, 'Perhaps you have letters for me?' and I having replied, without turning my head, that I had, she rejoined: 'Do not name them to any one.' While we were discoursing after dinner on the matters that had occurred, we were joined by a person who made us various compliments in French, and then proceeded to inquire if we had letters for her Majesty. I began at once to give ambiguous replies; that we were not there for business; that we had no letters of recommendation, &c., until at length he repeated all that, in our short and fortuitous colloquy, the Queen herself had said to me. I then perceived that he could not be sent by any other than herself, yet for the greater security I asked for his name, and hearing that he was John Holm, I gave him the letter. The following morning, nearly

nearly two hours before the usual time for going to court, John Holm gave us to know that her Majesty would speak to us. We went immediately, and had hardly entered the 'Vierkant,' where there was no one then but the officer on guard, than the Queen came forth and appeared to be surprised, either because none of the gentlemen were yet there or because we had been the first to arrive. She put some few questions to us respecting our journey, then hearing the officer, she asked him if any of the secretaries had yet appeared. He replying that they had not, she commanded him to go and call one of them, when he did not return for an hour. When he was gone, her Majesty began to thank us courteously for the pains we had taken in making the voyage on her account; she assured us that whatever danger might arrive to us from being discovered, we should not fear, since she would not suffer that evil should befall us. She charged us to be secret and not to confide in any one, pointing out to us by name some of those to whom she feared lest we might give our confidence in process of time. She encouraged us to hope that if she should receive satisfaction, our journey would not have been made in vain. She questioned us respecting the arrival of Father Macedo, and how we had been selected to visit her court; and related to us in what manner the departure of Father Macedo had taken place."[1]

[1] Paoli Casati ad Alessandro VII. Sopra la Regina di Suecia Bibl Albani, quoted by Ranke, *History of the Popes*, vol. iii., p. 430.

Christine

Christine seems to have thought, once or twice, that she hesitated to separate herself from the country, the people, the church, and the God of her fathers; but she was mistaken. The yearning of her nature for change, for sensation, for penetrating the mystery and enjoying the sensation of private life, about which she had golden dreams, had laid fast hold upon her. It made all public business distasteful. She thought, to use her own expression, that she *saw the devil* when one of her secretaries approached her with despatches for her signature. Neither could she endure the society and manners of her people. Her most constant and welcome guest was the Spanish ambassador, who was privy to her religious tendencies, and who was authorized to offer her an asylum in his master's dominions, as well as to arrange all the preliminaries with the Pope for her reception into the Latin Church.[1]

Neither the entreaties of Oxenstiern nor of the aged Count de Brahe, who had placed the crown on her youthful head, could shake her determination. Having secured to herself, as she supposed, an adequate income, by a charge upon some of the revenues of the kingdom, on the 24th day of June, 1654, and in the

[1] Pallavicini, in his life of Pope Alexander VII., says: "The ministers of the Spanish court, when Molinos first proposed this thing, would by all means have had the Queen retain the kingdom, both because of the advantage to be gained by religion and by her Catholic Majesty, but when it was known that this could not be done but with offence to religion, the king was pleased to become the patron of so high-minded an act."

twenty-ninth

twenty-ninth year of her age, she abdicated her throne, and, with her suite, quit Sweden to seek what she expected would prove a more congenial home and more congenial employments. On her way through Brussels she abjured Lutheranism; at Innspruck she formally embraced the Catholic faith; at Loretto she offered her crown and sceptre to the Virgin Mary, and upon the invitation of the Pope went to Rome, where she was received with all the pomp and circumstance of a triumphant sovereign, or, perhaps it would be more correct to say, as the trophy of a triumphant prelate.

For several years to come we find Christine a sort of lioness *in partibus.* Now in Rome; now in other parts of Italy; now in France; then in Rome again; but she was so eccentric, so exacting, and so lawless, that her departure was generally a more welcome event than her arrival, everywhere.

She finally took up her permanent abode at Rome, where, as a royal convert, she was of more account than she could hope to be anywhere else.

In the course of time, and in consequence of unforeseen political vicissitudes in Sweden, her revenues were cut off, and she found herself reduced to a state of humiliating dependence. She was obliged to appeal to the Pope — then Alexander VII.— for aid, masking her purpose in the form of a request that he would require the bankers of Rome to cash her drafts, which had fallen into discredit. The Pope, who had doubtless

less carefully estimated her business value, sent her 10,000 scudi, and afterwards settled upon her a pension of 12,000 scudi per annum, to be expended, however, under the supervision and audit of Cardinal Azzolini, whose subsequent devotion and assiduity in her service, it is needless to say, calumny has not spared. He afterwards became her principal heir.[1] Christine was not long in realizing what all sovereigns had before her, who by abdication had hoped to retain the luxuries of power without bearing its burdens, that a queen without a kingdom was a divinity without a temple, whose worship was soon abandoned. She soon wearied of the obscurity which had been gradually settling down upon her, and of the indifference of the world to her fate, which it was no one's policy longer to disguise. She pined for her abdicated throne and power, and upon

[1] About two years before her death, the successor of Alexander, Pope Innocent XI., found or made a pretext for depriving the Queen of her pension of 12,000 scudi, of which he caused communication to be made through Cardinal Azzolini. In a letter which she immediately addressed to the cardinal, she assures him that he had given her the most agreeable news. "God, who knows my heart," she adds, "knows I do not lie. The 12,000 crowns which the Pope gave me was the only stain on my life. I received it from the hand of God as the greatest mortification by which he could humble my pride. I plainly see that I have entered into His grace, since he has done me the singular favor of taking it from me so gloriously. * * I pray you to thank Cardinal Cibo and the Pope, on my behalf, for discharging me from this obligation." — *Mémoires concernant Christine, Reine de Suède*, vol. ii., p. 260.

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the death of her cousin and successor, Charles Gustavus, in 1660, returned to Sweden and tried to recover them, but without success, the Swedes naturally resenting her insults and her apostasy. She also offered herself as a candidate for the thrones successively of Poland and Naples, but with no better success. She was now and from henceforth to be counted among the curiosities of Rome, as purely such as St. Peter's dome or the marbles of the capitol or the frescoes of the Vatican; that and nothing more. Like the *Santissimo Bambino*, she was used to work such little miracles for the church as required the prestige of royal blood and religious apostasy.[1]

The *History of Louis XI.*, by Du Clos, was condemned by the French Parliament for the remark that *La dévotion fût de tous temps l'asile des Reines sans pouvoir.* Whether true of all crownless queens or not, it is certain that Christine, in common with most converts to a new faith, was not content with being as papal as the Pope. That satisfied neither her intelligence, nor her judgment, nor her ambition. She could do nothing temperately. Nor could she tolerate any mys-

[1] Voltaire, in some verses which he addressed to Queen Ulrique, of Sweden, concludes a sketch of her predecessor, Christine, as follows:

Christine des arts le maintien;
Christine qui céda pour rien,
Et son Royaume et votre Eglise,
Qui connut tout et ne crût rien.
Que le Saint Pere canonise,
Que damne le Luthérien,
Et que la gloire immortalise.

The last line, perhaps, does more credit to Voltaire's gallantry than to his character as a historian or a prophet.

teries

teries. Her active mind and morbid taste for excitement soon lifted her into the nebulous atmosphere of mysticism, and she yearned for a supremacy in the church which she had inconsiderately surrendered in the state. If she could not be a queen, she would be a St. Catherine, or a St. Theresa. When Molinos arrived in Rome, he brought to her a letter of introduction from the Archbishop of Palermo, and it goes almost without saying that he was immediately received into her confidence and under her protection.

She promptly addressed to the archbishop the following letter:

"ROME, December 13, 1681.

"MY LORD ARCHBISHOP OF PALERMO:

"D. Michael de Molinos presented me the letter from your Holiness, which I received with much pleasure, from the particular consideration which I entertain for your goodness and virtue, of which it testified. Your Holiness may be assured of my readiness to coöperate according to my ability in the advancement of the cause for which I sent the Canon Laffarte to that court. Thanking your Holiness for your cordial expressions in my behalf, I recommend myself earnestly to your holy sacrifices, and pray God for your true prosperity.

"P. S.—I also recommend myself to the holy sacrifices of that saintly man, although I have little faith in saints who eat; but, at all events, the sacrifice always has its effect."[1]

[1] *Mémoires concernant Christine, Reine de Suède*, vol. iv., p. 36.

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Four months later, Christine writes to the archbishop another letter, which is important for the evidence it furnishes of the interest taken in Molinos and his doctrines by an officer of such high rank in the church, and also of the need which Molinos was already beginning to experience of official protection.

"ROME, April 8, 1682.

"I did not sooner answer the letter of your Holiness of the 20th of January, so confounded was I by what you wrote concerning our Doctor Molinos. Though you thank me so abundantly for the protection I have extended to him, your Holiness knows that he cannot lack the protection of God, who is truth and justice itself, and whose cause is his cause. Our Molinos therefore cannot be overwhelmed by his adversaries, whatever persecutions he may be compelled to endure. I am, however, beholden to your Holiness for the affectionate sentiments which your Holiness expresses on this occasion, and your Holiness may be assured that I shall not cease to protect Molinos, about whom your Holiness shall know all that takes place. Recommending myself," etc.

About three years from the date of this letter, the Archbishop of Palermo was translated to the archiepiscopate of Seville, which was regarded as a substantial evidence of his favorable standing at the pontifical court, where, up to this time at least, friendship for Molinos

Molinos did not seem to bring bad luck. In the postscript to a letter dated Nov. 11, 1684, congratulating the archbishop upon his promotion, the Queen writes:

"* * * I take our Molinos to witness the sincerity of the sentiments of esteem and affection which I profess towards your Holiness, and I hope to have the opportunity of showing by actions the real justice I do to the worth of your Holiness."

This letter shows how greatly their relations had changed in the three short years since "our Molinos" was first presented to the Queen. It is no longer the Queen but the priest who is the patron.

CHAPTER IV.

Father Mabillon, the Benedictine, at Rome—Father Petrucci and the Inquisition.

AS the resistance of the water to a ship increases with its speed, so the hostility to Molinos increased with his popularity. In a letter written in June, 1685, seven months after the preceding, Christine writes again to the Archbishop of Seville: "Our Molinos is more and more persecuted, but I hope that he will triumph more and more so long as he finds innocence protected by the Lord our God. My Lord, we need patience. Gold is refined in the furnace, and truth will be victorious in the end, so please God."

The tone of this letter is ominous. Evidently the clouds that were gathering over Molinos were growing more portentous and sullen.

Among the important arrivals at Rome in the spring of 1685 was Father Mabillon, of the famous Congregation of St. Maur, to prosecute a mission confided to him by Letellier, then Archbishop of Rheims, for the

the collection of books and manuscripts in Italy with which to enrich the library of his royal master, Louis XIV. Mabillon's private letters, written from Rome to his brethren of St. Maur, sometimes by his own hand and oftener by the hands of one or two of the brethren of his Order who accompanied him, contribute much precious information in regard to some of the succeeding stages of the war upon the Quietists — information all the more valuable because it reaches us through a source little liable to the refracting influence of partisanship, and because it was given in the freedom of as much confidence as in those days one monk could be supposed ever to have in another of his own Order.

Molinos, as we have said, was arrested only a few days before Mabillon's arrival. It was the theme of every social circle. The most eminent and influcntial people were divided in opinion, less as to the justice of his treatment than as to the relative strength of the embattled combatants. Before the Inquisition had laid hands upon him, and while it was simply a struggle with the Jesuits, Molinos had troops of powerful and outspoken friends, but when it was known that he had fallen into the slimy and inexorable embrace of the Dominican octopus, none but hot-heads felt like speaking or writing with freedom about him. The forces antagonized were formidable and, on one side at least, as merciless as the grave. The Pope Innocent XI., though known to be friendly to Molinos, was seventy years of age, quite infirm, saw very few people, and trusted

trusted none. What sacrifices, if any, he would make to protect Molinos, or, if any he could make would be effective, no one could guess, while every one knew that no battle was ever fought with the Jesuits successfully without sacrifices.

The first notice of Molinos which appears in the correspondence of the Benedictine emissaries is the following paragraph of a letter signed by Claude Estiennot, and dated from Rome, July 30, 1685. Molinos had been in prison already several weeks.

"* * * Sleep in peace, but do not make the prayer of Quietism as some do here who are called Quietists. They are the new *Illuminés* who give everything to the soul and deny the body nothing, rejecting vocal prayers, penitential acts, and mortifications, &c. There is a large number of them in prison, where they will have leisure to make the prayer of Quietism. Nevertheless, the writings of Dr. Molinos are under investigation, preparatory to his trial. We will send you the result."[1]

On the day following that on which the foregoing letter was written, they wrote again:

"ROME, July 31, 1685.

"* * * I sent you a word in the last touching Dr. Molinos, the Spanish priest. They have put him,

[1] *Correspondance inédite de notices d'éclaircissements, etc., Mabillon et de Montfaucon par M. Valéry. Lettre xlii. avec l'Italie, accompagné de*

as

as I wrote you, in the Inquisition. We do not yet know precisely what are the causes of his imprisonment. They have also put there for the same cause some ecclesiastics, some secular persons, and even some ladies of quality. I have met some very sensible and fair-minded people who speak of Molinos in very favorable terms, and who said he was a very humble and disinterested man. All do not share these sentiments, but it is better to believe good than evil. They may well have abused the teachings of this ecclesiastic. He is not the first person put into the Inquisition whose innocence was subsequently conceded."[1]

One week later, the Benedictines refer again to this subject, and make special allusion to the interest taken in his case by Queen Christine:

"ROME, August 7, 1685.

"* * * Some say that the affair of the Quietists will end in smoke. The Queen of Sweden continues her protection to Doctor Molinos, the head of this party. They say that this Spaniard was never more splendidly treated than since his arrest, through the liberality of this princess,[2] who is exerting her influence to have him liberated. They are very severe here with all who circulate scandalous news. A Spanish priest, who is charged with this offence, has been arrested, and will be lucky

[1] *Ibid.*, *Lettre xliv.*

[2] The Queen used to send him, daily, everything of which he had need, from her kitchen. — *Mem. concern. Christine*, vol. iv., p. 36.

if

if he gets nothing worse than the galleys. An old man of sixty years, who wrote at this priest's dictation, and distributed the calumnies, was hung on Friday last. All this, joined to the affair of the Quietists, has given currency to a clever pasquinade. Pasquin tells Marforio he is going to quit Rome. When asked the reason for this resolution, he replies: 'He who talks is sent to the galleys, he who writes is hung, and he who is quiet goes to the Inquisition.'[1] So he thinks it time to quit Rome."

On the same day, Porcheron, one of the Benedictines, opens the case of Molinos more fully, although with characteristic prudence abstaining, as they all do throughout their correspondence, or at least until after the decisions of the Holy Office had been pronounced, from committing themselves to any positive opinions on the merits of the questions at issue.

"ROME, August 7, 1685.

"* * * Nothing is more divided than Rome about Molinos and the Quietists. I observe that most fair-minded people agree that this doctor was irreproachable in his life and morals. Don Jean[2] sends to Monsignore de Rheims[3] two books and other facts *pro* and

[1] Chi parla è mandato in galera; chi scrive e impiccato; qui sta quieto va al Santo Officio.

[2] Mabillon.

[3] Letellier, Archbishop of Rheims, who succeeded Colbert in the councils of Louis XIV., under whose auspices Mabillon and his party were *con*

con by the post. I have read none of this, but learned Frenchmen who have read them find nothing to condemn in them.

"The most rational objections to the pretended innocence of Molinos are:

"*First.* That no one is arrested by the Holy Office who is not two-thirds convicted in advance of the offence for which he is arrested.

"*Second.* He was on excellent terms with the Pope, who, not disliking Spaniards, would not have changed his opinions if good reasons had not been given him to do so — so good even that he is reported as saying: '*Veramente siamo ingannato.*'[1]

"*Third.* The Queen of Sweden and Cardinal Azzolini,[2] both friends of Molinos, have exerted themselves to know the end of the affair so far as the prisoners are concerned. The Queen received for reply that they could not reveal to her any part of this secret, except that the evil was great, greater than was supposed. After all, I believe one may reasonably say that 'the great sin' of these people was the possible consequences,— the fear that they should become a sect which would be the more dangerous for growing up in the bosom and noblest parts of the

sent into Italy, and to whom the *Iter Italicum*, written on his return, was dedicated.

[1] Truly we have been deceived.

[2] Azzolini, it will be remembered, was the cardinal charged by the Pope with the supervision of Christine's finances.

Catholic

Catholic faith. For it is well you should know, my dear friend, that the propositions[1] of our lords make us pass here and throughout Italy, still more in Spain and in many parts of Germany, and even among the English and Dutch Catholics, for little better than heretics. * * * They have hung the secular who wrote against the Pope and the Court of Rome. The Pope wishes the priest who was guilty of the same crime should die also. When one asks specifically what this secular has written, they say (I trust through discontent with the pontifical court) that he had only made a pasquinade on the late ceremony of the *Haquenée*, saying that the parade had made the snail leave his shell; in other words, that the Pope had been constrained by this occasion to be borne from his chamber to his chapel to receive homage.[2] Apropos of this, a joke is current which they put in the mouth of Pasquin. He says he means to quit Rome at once. Why? 'Because if a man here speaks, he is sent to the galleys; if he writes, he is hanged, and if he keeps silent, he is thrown into the Inquisition' (*Per che qui parla va in galera, qui scrive é spiccato, qui é quieto é inandato al Sant' Officio*). These three horns of Marforio's dilemma relate to the secular who had been hung for writing as

[1] The four propositions adopted by the French bishops in 1682, setting new bounds to the authority of the Papacy in France. They were written by Bossuet.

[2] Innocent, for reasons sufficient for himself, had been leading a very secluded life, and was very inaccessible.

above,

above, to the ecclesiastic who was sent to the galleys for having written what was dictated to the secular, and finally to Molinos, who, for being the chief of the Quietists, had been sent to the Holy Office."[1]

Only five days after the date of the foregoing letter, we have a letter from Bossuet, in the course of which it transpires not only that the Molinos prosecution was attracting the attention of the hierarchy in France,— confirming what Burnet had learned from a provincial of the Jesuits, that they were using Louis XIV. to work their purposes upon the Spanish iconoclast,— but also that to those of his acquaintance who had known Molinos — and here is probably an allusion to Cardinal d'Estrées, with whom Bossuet was in correspondence, and who had hitherto been a friend of Molinos — the prosecution was a surprise. It was not till five or six years later, and when Fénelon ventured to say that Madame Guyon might be a Quietist without necessarily deserving to be roasted, that the Bishop of Meaux put on his war-paint:

"We are awaiting the issue of the Molinos affair, which has not a little surprised every one, and especially those who had known Molinos in Rome. I know persons so zealous for him that they wish to believe everything done against him is the work of a secret cabal, and that he will come out of it not without honor; but what we see of it has not that aspect."

Bossuet knew too well, and to his sorrow, the power of the Jesuits over the King and the power of

[1] *Ibid.*, Letter xlvi.

the

the King at Rome, to suppose that an obscure Spanish priest could long make head against such a combination.

The friends of Molinos, however, were still active, and some of them courageous. Even the Archbishop of Seville did not shrink from manifesting his cordial sympathy, nor from exerting all his influence to sustain him. The following letter from Queen Christine is in reply to one of his appeals:

"ROME, November 17, 1685.

"*My Lord Archbishop of Seville:*

"Your Holiness's letter of the 28th of August was very welcome, as well on account of the affection as of the esteem I feel for you. I sympathize sincerely with your sorrow for the troubles of Dr. Molinos, of which I heard with infinite displeasure. Your Holiness is right in assuming that I extend to him my protection, and you may be assured that I shall continue to do so. I only regret that it does him so little good. I console myself, however, with the hope that, before such a just and wise tribunal as the Holy Office, innocence will finally triumph over imposture and malignity, as it is the cause of God, and I am confident that His Providence will rule everything to His greatest glory and service. Meanwhile, I thank your Holiness for your obliging expressions in my behalf, and commend myself to your holy sacrifices, praying God to preserve and prosper you."

The

The Queen somewhat overestimated her firmness. It is stated in the *Théatre Européen* for the year 1687 that she threw into the fire, in the presence of her domestics, all the letters and books of Molinos. "If this be true," says her biographer, "it was as a precaution, seeing that the Pope himself did not escape the pursuits of the Holy Office." [1]

Father Petrucci, who, as we have seen, had lent his pen to the propagation of the doctrines of Quietism, was so hotly pursued by the Inquisitors, that the Pope, to save him, was obliged to make him a cardinal,[2] and he seems to have been the only one of the disciples to whom friendship for Molinos brought any luck, at least in this world.[3]

[1] *Mem. Conc. Christine*, vol. ii., p. 186.

[2] It is a curious and suggestive peculiarity of the tribunal of the Inquisition, that it had no jurisdiction over the Pope, his legates, nuncios, cardinals, bishops, or familiars. They, however, were not wholly irresponsible. Poison and the dagger always remained, and they have usually proved quite as good judges of heresy as the Inquisition.

Secular sovereigns are not among the privileged.

[3] "The cardinal [Petrucci] was afterwards prosecuted on account of his female devotees, whom he called canonesses, and, it is said, made wear the tonsure. He was likewise accused of frequenting too often the monastery belonging to the barefooted nuns of St. Theresa, in which he preached up the Molinist doctrine of praying in quiet and tranquillity, to which he gave the name of holy repose. And it is said that the greater part of these nuns were infected with this delusion, and that the cardinal had laid his hands a little too familiarly upon more than one of them Besides, he kept some young

His

His promotion was good for the following distich from Pasquin:

> " Crimine sunt similes ambo, sed dispare sorte,
> Ostrum Petruccius; vincla Molinos habet."
>
> (Their crime the same, yet how unlike their fate:
> To one the purple and to one the prison's gate.)

men and women in a country-house he had, not far from the place of his residence, whither he went often to divert himself. All these matters appear in the cardinal's trial, by the declaration of a certain she-bigot called by the name of Frances, whom the cardinal had many and many a time instructed in this matter of *holy reposes*. She confessed freely everything the cardinal had taught her, and said, moreover, that he had attempted to lie with her in an unnatural way.

"Besides, a great many other she-devotees were well affected to this cardinal, who owned publicly that they received instruction from him, and that he allowed them a monthly pension of five-and-forty giulios (about six dollars American money), which the cardinal was wont to distribute to them with his own hand. This delusion began to spread itself so far, that many other women gave themselves up to this life, being continually in prayer, and enjoying the holy repose, as they called it, exactly in the same manner as it was recommended by that wicked wretch Molinos, of whom the cardinal was a disciple, having been instructed by him, and having received from him many of his doctrines in writing.

"Notwithstanding the strict inquiry made into this cardinal's life, by many vigorous proceedings, yet he has always been found innocent as to anything of sensuality and covetousness, which are the two poles on which the malice of mankind, and especially of the Quietists, usually turns. Nevertheless, because of the scandals which some of his disciples

ples had given, the Inquisition obliged the Pope to recall him, and to make him renounce his bishopric, that his female devotees and his other disciples might have no further hopes of seeing him any more in those parts."—*The Present State of the Court of Rome, or the Lives of the Present Pope, Clement XI., and of the Present College of Cardinals*, p. 125.

CHAPTER V.

The Trial and Condemnation of Molinos.

MOLINOS did not quail before the gathering storm. Nothing, not even the promise of his freedom nor immunity from torture, could make him admit the charges of impiety imputed to him, nor abjure the doctrines he had taught. "The reports which Cardinal Conti has from Rome," writes Father Segneri to Cosmo the Grand Duke, on the 11th of January, 1686, "are, that Molinos, being interrogated by the *Congregatione Graciosa*[1] if he had need of anything, replied, '*De nada*,' and said nothing more, and it is believed he will stand firm. Signor Cardinal Azzolini[2] was absent from the Congregation, and with another cardinal was excused on account of indisposition, which gives food for much speculation. The difficulty of the Pope's interfering in the deliberations of a Congregation

[1] A Jesuitical euphemism for the Tribunal of the Inquisition.

[2] The friend of Queen Christine and of Molinos.

causes

causes them to be much protracted; it not being possible, without his Holiness, easily to reconcile the diversity of views."[1]

It was evident from the tone of this note that the Pope was now the only obstacle to the conviction of Molinos. But even popes have their masters in Rome. Months rolled on, Molinos still in prison and the question of his guilt or innocence still undetermined. The delay was ominous. Those nearest the Pope and most in his confidence, who before had made no secret of their sympathy with the prisoner, fled to cover. Nay, there was but too much reason to fear that the Pope himself was beginning to weaken, for in February of 1687, a circular signed by Cibo, the Cardinal Secretary of State, was issued in obedience to instructions, not, it is true, from the Pope, but, what was worse, from the Sacred Congregation itself, and addressed to "all potentates, bishops, and superiors in Christendom, warning them to break up all the schools, associations or brotherhoods in which, under the pretext of spiritual conference, certain directors without any experience of the ways of God known to the saints, and perhaps even with evil intent, feigned to lead souls in prayer which they call quietude, or pure love and interior faith, and other names."[2]

It was apparent that a circular of this character from the Cardinal Secretary, who, as well as his master, was

[1] *Lettere inedite*, p. 53. [2] Appendix B.

not

not a little compromised by his friendship for Molinos,[1] would never have issued had not the enemies of the mystic gained the ascendant. Like evidences of the activity of the Jesuits reached Rome from abroad, especially from France. From Spain, too, the omens were growing unfavorable. The Inquisition of Aragon solemnly condemned *Il Guida Spirituale*, and imposed upon it all the customary penalties for printing, selling, or reading a heretical book, quite regardless of the fact that the same work had twice before received the approval of the Inquisition of Spain, and a Latin version of it had been printed at Leipsic with the "approbation" of the Archbishop of Seville.[2]

Encouraged by all these evidences of approaching triumph, the Jesuits proceeded to hunt up and arrest all who had been instrumental in disseminating or countenancing the doctrines of Molinos. Nor these only, but all who by the terrors of torture or the shame of

[1] La Bletterie, the friend and correspondent of Fénelon, in one of his letters *Sur la rélation de Quiétisme*, says that Innocent XI. had put himself under the spiritual direction of Molinos. *Œuvres de Fénelon*, vol. 10, p. 74.

[2] "FLORENCE, Jan. 1, 1686.

"I cannot doubt that Father Serra has sent you the edict of Spain against the *Guida* of Dr. Molinos. But to be sure of your Highness having one, I have thought it best to enclose to you a copy sent to me. It will suit me to have it again when your Highness gives me the privilege of seeing you again before your departure. I wish to hope this, because *the evil* is by Divine favor diminishing." — *Lettere inedite di Paolo Segneri*, p. 49.

the

the *San benito* could be made to disclose any evidence which might be made a pretext for the arrest and conviction of others. The prisons were thronged[1] with the fruit of these pursuits, and one might have supposed from visiting them that Quietism was, if not the only crime known to the Roman law, the only crime which was committed, or, at least, that was punished by imprisonment. Owing to the secrecy with which the doings of the Inquisition are conducted, but little is known of the charges against, or of the punishment of, multitudes who perished in this ruthless raid. Some glimpses of their proceedings, however, have shone through the private correspondence of the period, from which the rest may be judged. Not being able to discipline Petrucci, to whom the wings of a cardinalate had been given to enable him to fly above his pursuers,

[1] "Suddenly, in 1687, the Inquisition caused the arrest of two hundred persons, among them Count and Countess Vespiniani, Don Paolo Rocchi, confessor of Prince Borgia, the nephew and secretary of Cardinal Petrucci, while the cardinal himself was obliged to hide for a time. Cardinal Caraffa and the Cardinal Ciceri had the same inquietudes. Don Livio, the nephew of the Pope, thought it prudent to quit Rome, and retired to one of his country-houses on the sea-shore. There was general consternation at Rome and throughout Italy. Every one trembled for himself, and not a voice was raised in behalf of Molinos. This priest, who for more than twenty years had sustained at Rome the reputation of a saint, passed all at once for the wickedest man of the age."—*Madame Guyon; sa vie, sa doctrine, et son influence, par L. Guerrier*, p. 138.

they

they at last seized upon his unfortunate amanuensis, the Abbé Taya, whom they frightened nearly to death. Etiennot wrote to his brethren at St. Maur — Mabillon and his companions had already left Italy — some letters which, besides giving important details of the Abbé Taya's troubles, and of others in the same category, throw much valuable side-light upon the methods and purposes of the Inquisitors. On the 2d of July, 1687, he writes:

"It is wished that the sentence of Molinos be pronounced, and a well-informed person told me that what could would be done to save him from burning. This affair has afflicted the Holy Father extremely. The captain of the Piazza d'Espagna has died in the castle of St. Angelo. He has thus escaped prosecution."[1]

"ROME, Aug. 5, 1687.

"* * * Thursday evening, after various complaints addressed to the Holy Office against the poor Abbé Taya for what he had said and written, and for having prepared an apology for the opinions of Cardinal Petrucci and the Quietists, and printed it, the police went to his apartment, took him, and put him in prison. He at first fainted. When he came to, he asked only that they would notify Cardinal Petrucci that they were taking him to the Holy Office. A commissioner of the Holy Office was sent at the same time to seize his books and papers. If they find the disser-

[1] *Cor. inédite de Mabillon*, &c., v. ii., p. 68.

tation

tation there it will go hard with him. Monsignor Ciampini, with whom he had come to reside, had luckily dismissed him some months before. This has afflicted his friends, but Monsignor Victori, who came to see me this morning, avowed that he had drawn this upon himself by his talk and by the obstinacy he has shown for the Quietists. What will afflict him is that when the news of his arrest was communicated to Monsignor the Cardinal Petrucci, the cardinal declared that he had never asked him to write for him, nor had any need of his help for his justification. Here is a poor fellow lost. As for Monsignor the Cardinal Petrucci, they tell me that he is now printing a work in which he disavows, recalls, or explains the opinions or expressions in his book which are thought too strong, and that he has testified to the Holy Father that he had believed he was writing and speaking the truth, but if the Holy Father judged differently, he was ready to submit, retract, &c. As for Molinos, no one knows what to say. I have a copy of his trial. It fills almost a ream of paper. In the two hundred and sixty propositions there are some which are not excusable. A part are already condemned. I will endeavor to send you the decree by the next opportunity."[1]

In a letter written a few weeks before this, Estiennot had given the following details of the progress of the trial of Molinos, with which his correspondent is here assumed to be acquainted:

[1] *Cor. inédite de Mabillon*, &c., vol. ii., p. 76.

"They

"They are still in hot pursuit of Molinos. A friend has allowed me to overlook the record of the trial. * * * There are two hundred and sixty propositions drawn from his letters and writings, most of which are untenable, and others are expressed in very harsh terms. They say that we shall see, before very long, most of these propositions condemned by the Holy Office. Not a word has yet been said of his book. It is not five years since it was approved by this court, and how can it so soon decide to condemn it? That will come, but it takes time."[1]

On the 12th of August, we hear again, from the same source, of Father Taya:

"ROME, Aug. 12, 1687.

"* * * A Father Boussy, of the Chiesa Nuova, having composed an apology for Molinos and Cardinal Petrucci, showed it and handed it for examination to Abbé Taya, who found it very well done. They afterwards showed it to Cardinal Cibo, who gave a permission by word of mouth to a bookseller to print it. This became known. The books were seized; Father Boussy went and accused himself before the Holy Office and thus drew himself out of the affair, while the poor Abbé Taya, who was not the author of the treatise, has had to pay for all. They say that he has confessed and avowed all, and that by this means he will be able the sooner to draw himself out of the busi-

[1] *Cor. inédite de Mabillon*, vol. ii., p. 49.

ness.

ness. But with all this he is a lost man, and has nothing more to hope from this court."[1]

"ROME, Aug. 19, 1687.

"* * * I have a copy of the Abbé Taya's apology for Cardinal Petrucci. It is not badly done, but he has printed it without the permission of the Master of the Sacred Palace; he has talked too freely; in fact they were not well disposed toward him *(lui en voulait)*, and for some time have been waiting their *opportunitatem*."[2]

At length, after twenty-two months' close confinement; after enduring tortures to compel inculpating confessions, of which the world has been permitted to know nothing, except what they are entitled to infer from the well-known usages of the Inquisition; after all the letters he had received for more than twenty years had been put into the crucible of their malignity, to extort from them poison that would kill and not betray; after hunting down every man, woman, and child in Rome not too formidable by their rank or connections, who could be induced by their fears or their hopes to repeat real or imaginary conversations with the accused, Molinos was brought forth from his dungeon to receive the judgment of the Inquisitors.

On the morning of the 3d of September, 1687, the church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, at Rome,

[1] *Cor. inédite de Mabillon*, vol. ii., p. 81.

[2] *Cor. inédite de Mabillon*, vol. ii., p. 84.

was

was thronged at an early hour. The stalls, or *palchi*, of which a large number had been erected for the occasion, were filled by the nobility and with prelates of distinction. The college of cardinals, the General of the Inquisition and all his officers, were there, too, seated opposite each other upon a platform reserved for them. Every remaining place to sit or stand upon in that vast temple was occupied, for had it not been posted upon all the churches in Rome that on that day and in that church the officers of the Inquisition were to proclaim the result of their inquiries into the alleged heresies of Molinos? To insure a large attendance, and to give to the impending ceremonies as much as possible the air of a popular manifestation against the accused and his followers, the public had been also notified, several days before, that an indulgence would be accorded of fifteen years to all, and of forty years to some, who should assist at the ceremonies of this *auto da fé*.

It was a gala day for Rome, and all its population, from the highest to the lowest, seemed to have been condensed within the walls of this famous church, which resounded with the murmur of conversation, with the flutter of dresses and of fans, and which within the memory of men then living had witnessed the humiliation of Galileo. In the curiosity excited by every new or conspicuous arrival, in the gayety of the scene, in the pleasure of unexpected meetings and joyous greetings, in the quickened wit and lively repartee, which

which are the familiar incidents of an unoccupied crowd, the occasion which had brought the assembly was almost forgotten. Suddenly the noise is hushed, the motion of fans is suspended, and all eyes are directed towards a side door nearest the platform occupied by the Inquisitors. An aged monk, attended by an officer, was approaching with a slow and solemn pace. His hands in manacles were held in front of him. In one of them he bore a candle. With a self-possessed, though somewhat severe expression, he walked slowly towards the place assigned him by his attendant, fronting at once the cardinals and the Grand Inquisitors.

Molinos, the man upon whom now every eye in the vast and breathless assembly was fixed, was about sixty years of age. His frame was robust, his movement dignified and majestic. A settled expression of melancholy sat upon his face; his complexion was quite dark, and his nose was both long and sharp. He wore the frock of his Order, descending to his heels, and having the soiled and shabby look which daily use during nearly two years' confinement in prison sufficiently explained. The scene in which he bore so conspicuous a part seemed to find no reflection in his face. It expressed no emotion, but said in language more eloquent than words, "This is your hour and the power of darkness." We are indebted to Estiennot, who was one of the spectators, for the fairest and, indeed, for almost the only account of it which was ever published, though it is given but as "a brief extract from a long letter

letter written from Rome"; on the very day of the ceremonies it describes.[1]

"ROME, September 3, 1867.

"To-day, in the Church of Minerva, in the presence of the college of cardinals and of an innumerable crowd, Molinos made his abjuration. We counted over fifty boxes *(palchi)* in the church, filled with ladies and of the highest nobility. In the other boxes were prelates, *religiosi*, seminarists, and there was not a place that was not crowded with people. Molinos was conducted to the platform facing the cardinals and the tribunal of the Holy Office, consisting of consulting prelates, of the General of the Dominican Order, of the Commissioner, of some of the Qualifiers who qualified the propositions, and other agents of the Holy Office. Molinos stood with a policeman by his side, who, from time to time, wiped his face. In his hands, which were manacled, he held a burning candle. From the pulpit near the criminal, one of the fathers of St. Dominick read, in a loud voice, an abstract of the trial. It was observed that his face, while this lasted, about three hours, as when he entered and left, was full of contempt and defiance, especially at the commotion of the

[1] The suppression of the larger part of the letter probably finds its explanation in the concluding paragraph of the papal bull in which Molinos was condemned, and in which any apology for him or his writings is threatened with all the penalties of the major excommunication.

people,

people, who, as they heard the account of some of his graver villainies, shouted boisterously, 'To the stake! to the stake!' *(fuoco, fuoco)*. During all this, Molinos did not even change color, but made his feeling of contempt only the more conspicuous. He did not even bow his head when several times the names of Jesus, Mary, and the Holy Sacrament were pronounced. Whence many concluded that he abjured, not from a detestation of the heresy which he heard read, but to avoid being made a spectacle of in the Campo di Fiore, where he would have been burned alive. The abstract of the trial consisted of two parts. One regarded the sixty-eight dogmatic propositions which are printed,[1] and accessible to every one. Of these there is nothing more to be said. The second relates to his wickedness, especially in sensual matters. Some of his offences were the following: For twenty-two years he had not confessed, because, as he affirmed, he knew that in all that time there was not material enough for a venial fault. During all his life he had not observed Lent, but on Fridays and Sundays had eaten as well flesh as fish. To some of his pupils he professed to have uttered prophecies.

"In giving a dirty shirt, which he brought to Rome from Spain, to one of his friends, he advised him to keep it with care, because after his death it would be recognized as a most important relic *(una grandisima reliqua)*.

1 Appendix C.

"To

"To the guard who bound and brought him through the street to the Holy Office, he said that he was the special agent of God, and that he (the guard) would be punished. After the reading of the trial was over, he was stripped of the long frock of the priest, and clothed with the garment of penance, with the cross on the back, showing through all the ceremony of excommunication his accustomed intrepidity and contempt. He was condemned to close confinement in the Holy Office for the rest of his life, to wear the garment of penance, with the cross on his breast, to confess four times a year,—at Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and All Saints' Day,—and besides to recite the *credo* every day, a third part of the rosary, and to meditate the mysteries. All his writings, as well manuscript as printed, are proscribed under the heaviest penalties.

"On the following day, the 4th, the two brothers of Casa Leone, of the diocese of Como, one a priest and the other a layman, made their second abjuration. The first showed signs of repentance, but the second appeared as defiant as Molinos. The matters read from the abstract of the trial were similar, but not as abominable as those about Molinos."[1]

The propositions which were read to him, and of which he was found guilty, were sixty-eight in number, though they are nearly all merely variations and exaggerations of a single theme.

[1] *Cor. inédite de Mabillon*, &c., v. ii., p. 95.

CHAPTER VI.

The Proceedings of the Trial, as reported by the Holy Office.

AN abstract of the trial of Molinos was prepared, apparently by some officer of the Inquisition, to give such information and produce such impressions of Molinos as it was thought desirable to have propagated in other quarters where Quietism had found friends. We have already cited a letter of Estiennot, in which he speaks of sending such an abstract to St. Maur. The Abbé Renaudot, writing to Bossuet some ten days after the trial, speaks of sending him one. "I have read," he says, "the entire trial, which occupies more than a ream of paper, but I have not dared to ask my friends here to give me a copy of so long a document. I send you, instead, an abstract of the whole, made by the hand of a master, with various letters. It has required some days to copy them." Father Germain thanks Magliabecchi, on the 6th of October, 1687, for sending him a similar document.[1] In the Magliabecchi collection of manuscripts, now be-

[1] *Cor. inéd. de Mabillon*, &c., v. ii., p. 113.

longing

longing to the National Library in Florence, there is an abstract of this trial, the one, doubtless, from which the copy sent to Father Germain was made. This and those referred to in the letters of the abbés Germain, Renaudot, and Estiennot are, no doubt, the same, and may, therefore, be regarded as the most "official" record of the proceedings which consigned Molinos to perpetual imprisonment and a premature grave that exists outside of the Vatican. Though prepared obviously in a spirit of foregone hostility to the accused and of blind servility to the accusers, it gives many facts in regard to the nature of the offences sought to be fixed upon Molinos which are curious, and deserve to be read, if only to show us how much the world has gained in tolerance, humanity, and common sense in two hundred years.

ABSTRACT OF THE TRIAL AND SENTENCE OF MICHEL DE MOLINOS, SON OF PETER MOLINOS, SIXTY YEARS OF AGE, A SPANIARD, OF THE PROVINCE OF ARAGON, OF THE DIOCESE OF SARAGOSSA.[1]

He was declared, by witnesses, to have taught divers doctrines which treated as lawful the commission of filthy, obscene, and beastly acts; with using to this end the sacred robes and instruments; also with

[1] *Codice MS. Magliabecchiano variorum anon.*, in classe xxv., 116, da pag. 178 a pag. 183.

having

having taught the lawfulness of detraction, resentment towards one's neighbor, anger, blasphemy; with cursing God and the saints, and with execrating the consecrated robes. He assigned for his excuse that these acts were the works of the devil, who operated as God's instrument, and that such violence should be regarded as necessary. Moreover, that they were not called to do penance for acts thus provoked, neither ought they to praise them nor to confess them, but to leave them unpunished, and, if scruples on account of such acts came, to make no account of them, because they were done without the consent of the higher nature, but solely by the force of the devil.

Moreover, he was suspected of having committed acts of sensuality with seventeen persons, and, besides, with sixteen between sex and sex, also with abusing the confessional. Being questioned on these last accusations, he denied absolutely the commission of such obscenities. He confessed to have esteemed many of the above-mentioned acts lawful, by reason of the demoniac pressure aforesaid, which, however, did not obscure the light of the superior part of the reason which remains illuminated, to consider these acts lawful, in proof of which he produced a writing he had made, which contained several examples from the sacred Scriptures, such as Samson, Jacob, David, Jeremiah, and Elias, all of whom, by constraint of the devil, perpetrated acts of wrath, sensuality, of blasphemy, and others like them.

In

In this writing are thirteen assertions, as may be seen in the printed propositions.

Hence, a rule for knowing if such constraint emanates surely from the devil, and if the soul assents to it. The rule is to notice whether the soul is conscious of not being disunited from God, and that it is not abstracted from prayer and union with God, being assured of this,—that all things come from God.

He says that, beyond this, a man ought to make no effort to provoke such constraint, but to act entirely as moved by God, to whom in all things he is submitted.

He confessed to have not counselled all kinds of persons in this way, but with some he proceeded differently, because of the shame they had for such acts, and not to frighten them from the confessional.

In the second place, he taught another prayer, called "Contemplation," consisting of an entire abandonment to the will of God, and in this prayer the soul is totally dead to itself and to its own powers, and does not either do or think but what God wills; and, though they should experience from this prayer no sensible advantage, they must not, on that account, be discouraged. On this point, fourteen approved good witnesses testified that they had been instructed by him to bring themselves into the presence of God without using any acts of external devotion, not even the sacraments, and in this way satisfied their highest affections without knowing if they were real affections or merely sensual desires.

The

The remedy he proposed for the temptations which might arise in such exercises was to assume a state of indifference and passive submission, without renewing any acts of will or other powers, they being obstacles to the quiet which the soul enjoys. All the powers should passively concur in this prayer, which the intellect cannot bend to its operations; nay, the whole soul, by becoming dead to the world, might esteem it proper to go naked through the Piazza Navona.

Moreover, he taught that, while in such prayer they ought not to do reverence to the sacraments or sacred images, because it impaired the effect of its operations; nay, he broke and caused to be broken the crucifixes and sacred images as impediments to prayer; and if one feels a desire to break forth into such acts of self-indulgence, he ought not to complain and make resistance with thinking of Paradise, or of Hell, or of death, nor have recourse to the saints for succor or assistance in liberating him, because he should be in all things and always submissive to the will of God, even joined to Him, and when people appeal to God through the saints as a matter of habit, they are like so many parrots who scream but want nothing; and, further, that one ought not to pray God to be delivered from sin, nor for any favor, nor to be spared chastisements, because that would evince a disposition to resist the will of God and to question his justice.

That

That a soul in this prayer should not pray that he might again do the will of God, because that would be an exercise of free will, nor should one pray God for the conversion of sinners, nor for the dead, nor to be delivered from evils.

That the saints had not attained to this perfection, because they walked by sensuous ways. Besides, there were many other propositions, which are given to the press.

Twenty witnesses testified that in these exercises they did not scruple at acts of impurity, of kissing, and of complaining, because the superior parts of their nature were rendered insensible; and they took the communion without confessing themselves or other preparation, as they would partake of a cake.

That the performance of these external acts of devotion were for little children, not for perfected men. On this point, many original letters of Molinos were produced, in which he confessed his approval of these practices, calling them by various titles — the "prayer of quietude," "fixed contemplation," "the state of indifference," "mystic death," "holy idleness."

Interrogated upon this point, he said that this doctrine could only be verified by those who followed the extraordinary ways, and by no others. He admitted that all the petitions of the Lord's Prayer were useless, except "thy will be done."

He confessed that for many years he had found many persons at the confessional without need of absolution,

lution, because they were perfect in the extraordinary ways of quiet.

He confessed that God wills the physical act of sinning, — "*il materiale del peccato*," — denied having taught that the interior fear of offending God was useless, only the external and sensible fear; and moreover, he declared that he had taught that a soul mystically dead is not subject to divine precepts, and that the divine law is for sinners and not for such souls.

Moreover, he confessed to having taught that it was lawful to eat flesh on Friday and Saturday in Lent, and other prohibited days, because the annihilated soul is not subject to this law. He confessed upon interrogation that he had never kept Lent here in Rome; to have frequently violated it on Fridays and Saturdays, by secretly eating fish and flesh. He said that making vows to God trenched upon God's freedom, and therefore was not a good thing. He declared that the mystic souls should believe themselves incapable of sin — *impeccabili* — because God, who operated in them, was impeccable. This was confirmed by two letters, in which he said that God bound the powers of the soul; that God operated in mystic souls, whereby they were rendered impeccable.

Being interrogated, he confessed to have never asserted the impeccability of a soul which does not see beyond the practical act of sinning.

He was declared to have said that the mystic death alone lifts the soul into the beatific vision on the earth;

earth; this was confirmed by a responsive letter, in which he cites the example of St. Paul, who was lifted into the third heaven, and by another letter in which he asserted that to such a soul may be said, *Beati mundo corde*, and here on earth, and he confessed it all.

It was declared by more than a hundred witnesses that he had approved of private meetings *(li conventicoli)* for men and women, although he denied this. Moreover, he caused himself to be esteemed a saint, saying, when taken to prison by the policeman who bound him, "Know you who I am? I am Doctor Molinos. Oh, how many there are in Rome who would pay something handsome to have the good fortune to stand here and speak to Doctor Molinos! This is a favor which God has conferred upon you. How many there are who have come to speak with me and I have declined to receive them, causing them to be told that I was not at home, or that I slept! But I could not say this to you. You have at last found your guardian angel." Then he exhorted him to quit the trade of a policeman, as dangerous to his salvation, and apply himself to the comprehension of his dogmas. "Yes, think well of it," and so beating his hands now and then as he went along the streets, dropping his eyes and then raising them, he said to the officer, "What have you concluded?"

It was further deposed that he had received and much commended many anagrams on the name of Michel

Michel Molinos, which were writ in his praise, calling them prophetic and divine sayings, and among them were three in which he was represented as a holy man of God and the honey of God, and such as were most acceptable to him, he corrected and sent to some persons.

A friar said to him that a certain monk was a saint. He replied that this was a very great mistake, because to know a holy man it required a most holy man, and he alone could know it. To another he pretended to have received one of his shirts all stained and dirty, and said, "Keep this, because I wore it on my journey from Spain to Rome, and after my death it will be a precious relic." Being interrogated, he replied that, in regard to the policeman, as in regard to the anagrams, he had not said any of those things to praise himself, but by the manner of his speech to make a stronger impression upon the policeman in favor of becoming acquainted with his dogmas. To the monk's statement, he replied that he had intended to say that no one was able to shine with a brighter light than his, which was another way of acknowledging his own nothingness. As to the shirt, he denied having given it to any one whomsoever; that it had been taken from him.

Two witnesses asserted that he spoke evil to them of the Holy Office (the Inquisition), saying it was incapable of comprehending his writings. This also he denied having said.

Propositions

Propositions against the Holy Office attributed to him:

First. Superiors ought to be obeyed in external things only; as to interior things, God alone.

Second. It is a ridiculous doctrine which says that we should regulate our consciences in submission to bishops or prelates.

Third. The exposure of the interior life is a secret fraud.

Fourth. In the world there is no tribunal competent to require a revelation of the contents of letters in matters of conscience.

Being interrogated, he replied, that one ought not to reveal interior acts, neither to superiors nor to prelates, nor to the Holy Office, except in judicial proceedings.

Finally, he was declared to have for a long time been in the habit of indulging with two ladies the habit of kissing and embracing one another, of taking immodest liberties with their persons respectively; with frequently passing naked through their rooms, with rubbing one against another, with witnessing these women frequently when urinating, and many other things which it would be immodest to mention. And he gave the women to understand that such acts were not sinful, but that they ought to become accustomed to them to the end that in the hour of death they might have no scruples.

Being

Being interrogated of these allegations, he admitted them all, affirming that they were not sinful, because they were the work of the senses without the assent of the superior nature which was united to God.

Being interrogated *de credulitate*, he replied that he believed himself superior to the danger of falling into sin, because of his habit of mortifying the flesh in this way. He finally said that he recognized the Holy Office as superior to his doctrines, and that he submitted himself in all things to the Holy Mother Church, confessing that he had erred and that he repented.

He was condemned as a dogmatic heretic to close imprisonment for life *(ad arctos carceres in perpetuo)*, to wear the penitential habit with the sign of the cross over his garments for the rest of his life; and the further penance was imposed of reciting the Apostles' Creed every day, the third part of the Most Holy Rosary every week, to confess sacramentally four times a year, and with the license of his confessor to partake of the communion.[1]

When the record of the trial and the series of condemned propositions had been read through, Molinos was conducted to the feet of the *Commissario* of the Inquisition, before whom he is reported to have

[1] See also *Historia di Tutte l'Heresie, descritta da Domenico Bernino*, tom. iv., p. 721, and the bull of Pope Innocent XI. beginning *Cœlestis Pastor*, 1687.

solemnly

solemnly abjured all the errors attributed to him by the tribunal, after which he received absolution from the *Commissario*, who then required him to remove his monkish frock and clothe himself with the customary penitential garment with the cross on the back. He was then conducted to a cell in the dungeons of the Holy Office, which he was destined never to leave again till death mercifully opened its door for him.

The decree of the Inquisitors was immediately confirmed by the bull *(Cœlestis Pastor)* of the Pope, in which the sixty-eight propositions that are alleged to have been extracted from the writings of Michel de Molinos and condemned as heretical were recited.[1]

[1] Appendix C.

CHAPTER VII.

Did Molinos abjure? — His trial a mockery.

IT is idle to discuss the fairness of a trial conducted like this in secrecy, and by a tribunal constituted, like the so-called "Sacred Congregation," not to judge, but to condemn; but there are some features of it which deserve greater prominence than we have given them in our hasty narrative.

First. None of the propositions condemned purport to be literal citations from any writing of Molinos, nor is the context of any proposition given, if there is any in which the words of Molinos are used, by the light of which only it could be fairly interpreted. Indeed, Father Mabillon, who was in Rome when Molinos was arrested, tells us that it was there understood that Molinos was not condemned for anything found in his published writings, but for the contents of letters written to divers persons, or at least for depraving expositions of those doctrines to his friends.[1]

[1] "Michel Molinos, Hispanus presbyter, ob suspectam in re- bus moralibus doctrinam, com- prehensus est jussu Romanæ

The

The writer of *Several Letters from Italy concerning the Quietists* treats all the stories of lewdness attributed to Molinos as impudent calumnies, set only to blast him and his doctrine, and that no proof was ever brought of it. D'Alembert speaks of him also as "a great director, and yet a good man, for which the Pope did him justice,—two titles for making a man many enemies."[1]

Second. The name of no witness is given upon the authority of whom all the allegations of scandalous conduct and teaching are made, nor was the accused permitted to confront them, or even to know their names.

Third. Not one of the twelve thousand, or, as some authorities have it, twenty thousand, letters found in his possession, and which, not his books, are made the chief witnesses against him, are produced or quoted. Had they furnished the proofs of the scandalous life

inquisitionis, aliis aliter atque aliter de eo opiniontibus. Liber ejus qui *Manuductio Spiritualis* inscribitur, hispanice primum, deinde italice multoties Romæ editus est, libellis scriptis atque editis impugnatus, quos in indicem censores retulerunt. Inde inferunt conjectores, Molinum, non ob libri vulgati doctrinam (tametsi is post comprehensum auctorem ad Hispanica inquisitione proscriptus est, Romana ægre ferente, quod occupatum esset ejus rei ab aliis judicium) sed ob scriptas ad diversas epistolas, aut certe ob pravas ipsius sententiæ interpretationes a suis affectis factas, in carcerem fuisse conjectam ex quo non facile se extricabit."—*Iter Italicum*, Jul. 10, 1685.

[1] See the letter cited *infra*.

charged

charged in the semi-official report of his trial, why were the Inquisitors two years in establishing his guilt, and why was not the Christian world satisfied of the justice of his condemnation, by the publication of at least one of these inculpating documents?

Fourth. Molinos is represented as having confessed that he had been a false guide, and to have abjured the errors imputed to him.

There is abundant reason to believe this a most wanton falsehood. Segneri himself, whose testimony to the firmness of Molinos may be taken *au pied de la lettre*, writing to the Grand Duke Cosmo just seventeen days after the scene at the Church of the Minerva, on the 3d of September, says:

"I am profoundly sensible of the benign attention your Highness has shown in sending me, by a special messenger, the proceedings on the trial of the unhappy Molinos, of whom *it grieves me to see so many signs of obstinacy*. This, in him, is the extreme of wickedness, and all proceeds from the profound pride which has led him to change the spirit of the Church from one into another" *(da uno in un altro)*.[1]

No one was likely to be better informed than Segneri, the chosen champion of his Order in the war against Quietism—a war upon the result of which his own liberty was, in a measure, depending.[2] No one

[1] *Lettere inedite di Paolo Segneri*, p. 102.

[2] Not till four years after the condemnation of Molinos was Segneri's *Concordia tra la Fatica e la Quiete* taken out of

was

was more interested than he in knowing and proclaiming the surrender of his enemy. His information, however, was that all the talk and all the givings out about the abjuration of Molinos were morally of a piece with the whole trial,—a pious fraud.

If Molinos confessed and abjured, when did he do it? Before or after the condemnation? Did he resist imprisonment, and the torture, and public shame for two years before he recanted, and was his public condemnation deferred until he was enfeebled by imprisonment and other means familiar to the Inquisition, or was he incarcerated for life because he would not abjure?

the Index and allowed to be published at Rome. In one of his letters to the Grand Duke Cosmo from Rome, February 24, 1691, Father Segneri writes: "We were in Rome on Thursday, the 23d. Here, by good luck, I found Signor Cardinal Colonna, one of the Conclave,—another divine favor. To-day I spoke with him. I found him in the best of humor, and he told me how to conduct *in the difficulties which beset me in consequence of the censure of the Concordia.*"—*Lettere ined. di Paolo Segneri*, p. 144.

On the 17th of March, three weeks after the foregoing, Segneri writes again: "On Sunday I completed the revision of the *Concordia*, with the aid of the Master of the Sacred Palace and of Father Fabri, Conventual and Consultor of the Holy Office, who were the two revisers assigned by the Holy Congregation. From both I received every courtesy, while all was settled in my own way. But this would not have been so easily accomplished except by personal presence. Thus the first purpose of my coming to Rome is accomplished."—*Ibid.*, p. 149.

Bernino,

Bernino, a contemporary witness, and one who had difficulty in finding words strong enough to express his detestation of Molinos, admits, in his *History of Heresies*, that it was not until after twenty-two months' imprisonment that Molinos showed any disposition to abjure.[1]

But why was he kept in prison after he had abjured, when if enlarged he could have done so much more than any other person — more even than Pope or Inquisitors themselves — to disabuse his followers and bring them back from their delusions? If he abjured, why have we not the fact over his signature; why was never a line from his pen allowed to reach his disciples or the public from the time he returned to his prison? Why were none but his jailer and persecutors permitted to see him or hold any intercourse whatever with him for the ten long years that he languished in confinement before death came to his release? If he had seen the error of his ways, why prevent him so carefully from using the remnant of his days in opening the eyes which he had darkened by his counsels? Probably no single one of the Inquisitors who had condemned Galileo a few years before, for teaching the Copernican theory in regard to the earth's motion around the sun, had any doubt that he

[1] "Scorsi ventidue mesi di carcerazione, provati li delitti, e contestati gli errori, egli mostrossi disposto all abjura di essi."—*Historia di Tutte l'Heresie, descritta da Domenico Bernino, fin al anno 1700*, vol. iv., p. 721.

was

was teaching the truth, or that his faith in that theory was unshaken by their persecutions and condemnation or his own abjuration of it; yet, when he had abjured, he was at once allowed to leave Rome and to write and publish what he pleased, providing it did not favor the Copernican heresy. It is absurd to suppose they would have been less worldly wise in their treatment of this comparatively unprotected priest—or less alive to the advantages of his enlargement as a means of vindicating their treatment of him.

Fr. Bruys, the author of *L'Histoire des Papes*, as published in 1732–3, and while authentic information from living witnesses of this transaction was accessible, speaks of the firmness of Molinos in defying the torture of the Inquisitors as an undisputed fact in his day. He says:

"The Inquisition put many of these sectaries (the Quietists) in prison, and among them Doctor Molinos, one of their chiefs. They gave him the question to make him disclose his accomplices. * * * To remedy the disorders occasioned by them, the Pope created a Congregation specially to attend to this business. * * * Nevertheless, Molinos remained firm in these opinions, despite the torments to which the Holy Office subjected him, to extort from him an abjuration of his impieties. The Pope pushed the business with much warmth, but Doctor Molinos and his adherents defended themselves with such subtlety as to surprise the cardinals and theologians who examined

ined them. Finally, the General Congregation of the Inquisition gave their sentence, by which Molinos was condemned to perpetual imprisonment, and to abjure sixty-eight propositions, which are reported in the *Mercures* for the month of October, 1687. One of these writers protested, in the month following, that he only reported them to satisfy public curiosity, and not to propagate heresy. 'For,' added he, 'one needs to have a disordered mind to find anything to their taste in this jumble of propositions, which, in my judgment, are falsely attributed to Molinos. According to all appearances, some good Jesuit father must have amused himself in imagining all these absurd impieties, and God knows what these pious souls are capable of doing. Has one ever seen more contradictions? I think not; and I maintain that Molinos was never capable of such maunderings. If he were, what is the good of making such a noise at Rome over a crazy man? But when we wish to destroy a person, nothing must be neglected. It is enough to say that the struggle is with a stronger party.'

"Many others were also persuaded of the innocence of Molinos, and, in fact, to believe him guilty of the horrors imputed to him is to suppose that this doctor was one of those visionaries who, even when not sleeping, reason like dreamers, without any coherence in their words or principles, or else that he was simply an impostor who wished to gratify his vanity, if nothing worse, in persuading devout people of the most strange

strange and convenient paradoxes, such as that the most sensual pollutions contribute to the greatest advances in the way of purification and illumination. It is at least certain that the principles which are attributed to him renew spiritual and carnal origenism, as any one will admit who has read the *History of Origenism*, by Father Doucin. It is none the less true that the Jesuits who cry so loud against the theory of Molinos accommodate themselves very readily to his morals in their practice. This we may see now in the scandalous history of the Jesuit Girard and his devoted Cadière."[1]

[1] *Histoire des Papes*, vol. v., p. 391.

CHAPTER VIII.

The further persecution of the Quietists — The Secrecy of the Confessional violated — The Pope disciplined for suspected Quietism — The Death of Molinos.

AT the close of the melancholy scenes at the Church of the Minerva on the 3d of September, 1687, the vast throng which had witnessed them, leisurely retired to their respective homes, soon to forget, in the distracting pleasures and cares of their daily life, the wretched priest who had been tormented and blasted before them to make a Roman holiday. Molinos, too, retired, not to his books, and his friends, and his cherished duties, but to the dungeon which for some two years already had been his cheerless home. Till now he may have indulged some illusions in regard to his fate. He knew he had warm, faithful, and powerful friends, and he, better than any one else, perhaps, knew to what extent the Pope had faith in the purity of his life, the spirituality of his teachings, and the cruel injustice of his punishment. But when he heard the sentence of the Inquisition, he must have realized that

that he was returning, like Galileo, some three-quarters of a century before, to a cell "which he was only to exchange for that narrower one which opens daily and is destined to receive us all."[1] No one now ventured a word for this "son of perdition." As soon as it appeared that the arms of his friends were shortened and powerless to save, there was a general *sauve qui peut* among his disciples. Every pulse of sympathy was suppressed, every compromising scrap of a letter or paper was sought for and burned, and silence was the only friend now left to plead the cause of Molinos.

The Jesuits followed up their advantage. They compelled every one who had been known or suspected of consorting with Molinos to join in and swell the cry of execration against Quietism, which was started by the rabble in the Church of the Minerva on the 3d of September. The mad dog had been taken and chained up. The next thing was to muzzle or destroy those whom he had bitten. Curious revelations followed. The trail of the serpent was traced into the sacred precincts of the Vatican. Only three days after the sentence of Molinos, Estiennot, who is still our best witness (though it will be remarked that his views of Molinos and his doctrines have undergone important modifications since the latter was officially proclaimed a *filius perditionis*), thus unbosoms himself to his St. Maur correspondent:

[1] Galileo to Cardinal Barberini, Dec. 17, 1631.

"ROME,

"ROME, Sept. 30, 1687.

" • • • A writing on the subject of the Quietists has appeared here and been denounced to the Holy Office. It was written by the Marquis de Pallavicini, the master of the chamber of Cardinal Cibo. He has been cited, but as he wrote but what the cardinal dictated, his Eminence has wished him to father the work, and not avow the cardinal's authorship. The Marquis was not willing to do this. Thereupon his Eminence dismissed him, and he has retired. Many other persons are in trouble with this Quietism, to whom, perhaps, out of respect to their rank and character, nothing will be said. It is inconceivable how many people who pass for being clever have given in to these illusions. Monsignor d'Estrées was one of the first to get his eyes open, and has pushed things most vigorously. Monsignor the Cardinal Ottoboni,[1] who, being bishop of Bresse, had found these *illuminati* in his diocese doing a great deal of mischief and giving him embarrassment, has also declared strongly against them, and not spared them.

" • • • They say that Cardinal Petrucci is at work upon his justification, or perhaps a retraction of the opinions found in his letters and writings, but nothing has yet appeared that I have seen. The Commissioners who have been sent to his diocese have not yet reported. It is only known that deaconesses and

[1] Afterwards Pope Alexander VIII.

priestesses

priestesses were found there. God grant there was nothing worse."

A little later, Estiennot writes again:

"ROME, Oct. 31, 1687.

"• • • They do not find much against the morals of Cardinal Petrucci; the evil is in his doctrine. An Augustine monk was taken yesterday to the prisons of the Holy Office; I cannot give his name. All we know is that it was for Quietism.

"The Rev. Father Appiani, Jesuit, has been judged and condemned to three years' close confinement, during which time he is to see no one, not leave his chamber, have neither fire nor lights, to fast on bread and water Fridays. Besides this, he is to spend seven years in the ordinary prison. He is thought to have got off at a bargain. They have also imprisoned two famous Quietists, who dogmatized."

Father Appiani did not trouble them long. He went mad, and died very soon after his sentence.

But the audacity of the Jesuits was not exhausted by the imprisonment of Molinos and the extirpation of his conspicuous disciples, nor even by the humiliation of bishops and cardinals and cardinal secretaries of state who had been suspected of countenancing him. They did not shrink from bearding the Pope himself in the Vatican, and putting him upon his purgation. It is authentically stated that a committee of Inquisitors waited

waited upon the old Pope, already in the last year of his life, to test his soundness on the all-absorbing question. The secrets of the confessional even were not respected in this war of extermination. But such facts are best stated by contemporary witnesses.

"Molinos[1] was clapped up by the Inquisition in May, 1685, and so an end was put to all discourses relating to him, and in this silence the business of the Quietists was laid to sleep till the 9th of February, 1689; then, of a sudden, it broke out again in a much more surprising manner. The Count Vespiriani, and his lady, Don Paulo Rocci (confessor to the Prince Borghese) and some of his family, with several others, in all seventy persons, were clapped up, among whom many were highly esteemed, both for their learning and piety. The things laid to the charge of the churchmen were their neglecting to say their breviary, and for the rest they were accused for their going to the communion without going at every time first to confession; and, in a word, it was said that they neglected all exterior parts of their religion, and gave themselves up wholly to solitude and inward prayer.

"The Countess Vespiriani made a great noise of this matter, for, she said, she had never revealed her method of devotion to any mortal but to her confessor, and so it was not possible it could come to their knowledge any other way but by his betraying that secret;

[1] See *The Substance of Several Letters sent from Italy concerning the Quietists*, supplement to *The Spiritual Guide*.

and

and, she said, it was time to give over going to confession if priests made this use of it, to discover those who trusted their secretest thoughts to them. And, therefore, she said that in all time coming she would make her confessions only to God. This had got vent, and I heard it talked of up and down Rome; so the Inquisitors thought it more fitting to dismiss her and her husband than to give any occasion to lessen the credit of confession. They were, therefore, let out of prison, but they were bound to appear whensoever they should be called for. I cannot express to you the consternation that appeared, both in Rome and many other parts of Italy, when, in a month's time, about two hundred persons were put in the Inquisition, and all of a sudden a method of devotion that had passed up and down Italy for the highest elevation to which mortals could aspire, was found to be heretical, and the chief promoters of it were shut up in prison.

"But the most surprising part of the whole story was that the Pope himself came to be suspected as a favorer of this new heresy, so that, on the 13th of February, some were deputed by the Court of the Inquisition to examine him, not in the quality of Christ's vicar or St. Peter's successor, but in the single quality of Benedict Odescalchi. What passed in that audience was too great a secret for me to be able to penetrate into. * * * A strict inquiry was made into all the nunneries of Rome, for most of their directors

directors and confessors were found to be engaged in this new method. It was found that the Carmelites, the nuns of the Conception of the Palestrino and Albano, were wholly given up to prayer and contemplation, and that, instead of their beads and their hours, and the other devotions to saints and images, they were much alone, and oft in the exercise of mental prayer. * * * I am told that men are now more puzzled in their thoughts with relation to the business of Molinos than ever. It was visible that his abjuration was only a pretended thing, for in effect he has abjured nothing; his party believe that they are very numerous, not only in Rome, Italy, Spain, France, and in all these parts of the world, but that they have many followers even in America itself. One sees them, now, in almost all the churches in Rome, some of them praying in corners with their hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, and all in tears and sighs, which was no small trouble to those who thought they had quite routed them, but find they were not so much quashed as it was thought they would have been by the mock triumph that was made upon Molinos, nor did they believe a word of those reports that were spread of his lewdness.

"They said there was no proof ever brought of it, and that there are many thousands in Rome of both sexes that conversed much with him, that say these stories that were given out concerning him are impudent calumnies, set only to blast him and his doctrine; and

and the truth is this seems much to be confirmed by the bull that condemns his books and his doctrine, in which no mention is made of his ill life and hypocrisy, which had been very probably done if the matter had been well proved; since this would not only have satisfied people, but would have very much confirmed the accusations of these horrid opinions that are laid to his charge, which would have appeared with much evidence if it had been found that his life had agreed with those tenets; for though it had been a just inference to conclude him guilty of those things because they were charged on him in the bull, yet one may reckon it almost a sure inference that he is not guilty of them since the bull does not tax him for them."

On the 12th of August, of the year 1689, in which this memorable visit of the Inquisitors took place, Pope Innocent XI. died, and with him the last hope, if any continued to be indulged, of the release of Molinos. The last few years of his life the Pope spent in the greatest seclusion, even holding his consistories in his chamber. He was succeeded by Cardinal Ottoboni, who took the title of Alexander VIII., on the 16th of October, 1689, and in the eighty-first year of his age. He was the cardinal who, as bishop of Bresse, we have seen two years earlier hunting the Quietists out of his diocese, and who signalized his accession to the pontifical throne by such scandalous nepotism as to make it the talk of all Europe. Even the prudent and gentle Mabillon did not scruple to make it the subject of an indignant protest

protest in his correspondence with Rome,[1] and Pasquin gave wings to the scandal by the remark, "*Qu'il aurait mieux valu pour l'Eglise être sa nièce que sa fille.*"

Of Molinos personally, nothing further is known, except that he continued to drag out a solitary existence in the little cell, *piccola stanza*, to which he was conducted from the church, for another ten years, practically as isolated from the world as if in his grave, and died on Holy Innocents' Day, December 28, 1696, in the 70th year of his age.[2]

THE doctrine of Quietism in its day involved as important interests as any of the theological differences of our own time; it divided church and state; tons of books were written about it, which are now forgotten,

[1] "Quod ut feliciter tandem exsequatur, Deum Opt. Max. votis, quibus possum, interpellare non desino: an vero effectus votis responsurus sit, adhuc in anticipiti res pendet. Illud sane optassem quod apud te, vir eminentissime, deponere non verebor, ut ab ecclesiæ negotiis gerendis, et splendido aliquo recte facto, potuis quam ab amplificatione familiæ suæ Pontificatum suum inchoasset. Id enim et spem omnium quam optimam ubique de ipso concéperant, confirmasset et alacres ad majora speranda effecisset. Verum quid modo a præmatura nepotis juvenis promotione et ab illa turba nepotum in urbem confluentium expectandum sit, sane non facile est conjicere."—*Correspondance inédite de Mabillon et de Montfaucon*, vol. ii., p. 205.

[2] *Hist. di Tutte l'Heresie da Bernino*, vol. iv., p. 721.

and

and even the questions it involved are now scarcely known. Nevertheless, they were not unimportant, nor are they unworthy of the curiosity of the Christian student. To what extent the soul may detach itself from the earth, and by what road of purification it may most readily and completely unite itself with God, will always be living problems and of incalculable importance. The doctrine of Quietude or Passivity was no invention of Molinos, but was the essence of mysticism, not only of the early Christian church, but more or less definite traces of it may be discerned in the religions of all the oriental nations which have left a literature. Even the Stoic philosophy was but a pagan phase of Quietism, while the Epicurean was the pagan phase of the church which denounced Quietism. The one taught endurance, and faith in the final triumph of what was for the best. The other taught a reliance upon human expedients as the highest security for human happiness, and a corresponding mistrust of any superior guaranties. Till the seventeenth century, the Latin church had successfully utilized this school of mystics. It canonized Theresa, François de Sales, and John of the Cross, who taught as unqualified Quietism as Molinos and Madame Guyon, whom a few centuries later it imprisoned, and Fénelon, whom it degraded.

This difference in the treatment of the early and of the later mystics does not imply any change in the policy of the Latin church, any more than a change of our

our clothing with the change of the season imports a change in the person that wears it. It was easy for the church to utilize the visions of St. Theresa, the raptures of St. Francis, and the morbid taste for suffering of St. John of the Cross, for they strengthened the hierarchy by illustrating the power of religious feeling, but unaccompanied by any effort to control or direct, and still less to curtail that power. It was not so easy, indeed it was found impossible, to utilize the intensely subjective speculations of the Quietists of the seventeenth century, who, unlike their predecessors, carried out the mystical dogmas to their logical consequences. Like the others, they held their intercourse directly with God, but unlike them, they threw away much of the machinery of the church through which that intercourse had been held, and upon which the church depended largely for its power and authority. If the penitent could go directly to God with his trouble, and feel sure of a response directly from God, what need of images, pilgrimages, rosaries, crosses, relics, ashes of the dead, dry bones, consecrated rags, and all the other innumerable contrivances by which the faithful are held in the thrall of the church?

This Molinos mysticism savored too much of the German mysticism of the fourteenth century, which contributed so largely to undermine the power of Rome, and prepare the way for the Protestant Reformation. It was, therefore, as natural for the church to silence Molinos as it was for it to canonize St. Theresa.

The

The monk was logical, the nun was not. The monk was polarized positively and the nun negatively. To an invalid whom a zephyr would refresh, a breeze might prove fatal.

Molinos was unquestionably a reformer. The discussions which he provoked and the doctrines to which he became a martyr were an important contribution to the depaganization of religion in Europe. He failed where monachism failed, though in a different way. The monk sought to escape from temptation by taking refuge in the cloister and the desert. The Quietists sought the same end by an annihilation of the appetites which breed temptation. Instead of resisting the propensities of the natural man, he delivered the natural man up rather a prey than what he should be — a sacrifice. Both overlooked the vital fact that wherever man can go, Satan can follow him, and that whatever may be the spiritual plane we occupy, our temptations to sin will be proportioned to our powers of resistance; that every incident in our lives is but a providential trial of our faith; in other words, it asks us the simple question whether, in what we do or leave undone in regard to it, we will do what we believe to be right, or what we do not believe to be right; whether we will yield to the appetites of the natural man, or whether we will hear the voice of God when He calls, and His knock when at our door. Man's only formidable enemies are those of his own household. To flee from the world and its duties, or to destroy the weapons

God

God has provided us for resisting them, comes to the same thing in the end. Life on earth is a perpetual struggle between the forces of good and evil, and any attempt to avoid the struggle is a fatal cowardice, sure to result sooner or later in capitulation to the enemy. In looking directly to God, and not to middle men, for light and grace, Molinos was in advance of his church, and it was that faith which made him strong and gave him throngs of followers. In neglecting to appropriate such light and grace to the duties of life; in rolling his talent up in a napkin, instead of using it in his Master's business; in treating man's creation rather as a freak of the Almighty than as a means for His glorification, Molinos made the mistake which wrought his ruin. He was doubtless a pure man, and a thoroughly pious man, but, like Fénelon, who fell in the same way only a few years later, he was enslaved by the traditions of the church in which he had been trained, and from which he had not the strength to emancipate himself. Like Icarus, however, they both fell in attempting great things.

SINCE the preceding pages were in type the author's attention has been directed to a recent English publication of rare interest and merit, entitled "John Inglesant; a Romance," in which Molinos, doubtless for the first time, figures as a part of the machinery of a work of fiction. John Inglesant is "a philosophical romance,"

romance," and one of its purposes seemed to be to keep alive in the world a healthy distrust of the paganizing influences of the Latin Church.

Of Molinos and his martyrdom the author takes substantially the same view that is presented in these pages — that he was a pure and spiritual-minded man, who wished to reform the church and vitalize religion, but that the controlling influences at Rome wished neither the one nor the other, and made an example of him to deter others from repeating the experiment. The work concludes with a brief statement of the issue between Molinos and the Jesuits,— or perhaps it would be more correct to say between Protestantism and Papism — Jesuitism being a logical necessity of the papal system,— which I am sure those of my readers who have not chanced to meet with the original will thank me for reproducing here:

I said to Mr. Inglesant[1] that I was greatly interested in the events of the last age, in which he had been so trusted and prominent an actor, and that I hoped to learn from him many interesting particulars; but he informed me that he knew little except what the world was already possessed of. * * * It appeared to me that he was not very willing to discourse upon these by-gone matters of state intrigue.

Seeing this, I changed the topic and said that, as Mr. Inglesant had had much experience in the working of the Romish system, I should be glad to know his opinion of it, and whether he preferred it to that of the English Church. Here I found

[1] John Inglesant, a romance by J. H. Shorthouse, p. 440.

I was on different ground. I saw at once, beneath the veil of polite manner which was this man's second nature, that his whole life and being was in this question.

"This is the supreme quarrel of all," he said. "This is not a dispute between sects and kingdoms; it is a conflict within a man's own nature — nay, between the noblest parts of man's nature arrayed against each other. On the one side, obedience and faith; on the other, freedom and the reason. What can come of such a conflict as this but throes and agony? I was not brought up by the Papists in England, nor, indeed, did I receive my book-learning from them. I was trained for a special purpose by one of the Jesuits, but the course he took with me was different from that which he would have taken with other pupils whom he did not design for such work. I derived my training from various sources, and especially, instead of Aristotle and the schoolmen, I was fed upon Plato. The difference is immense. I was trained to obedience and devotion; but the reason in my mind for this conduct was that obedience and devotion and gratitude were ideal virtues — not that they benefited the order to which I belonged, nor the world in which I lived. This I take to be the difference between the Papists and myself. The Jesuits do not like Plato, as lately they do not like Lord Bacon. Aristotle, as interpreted by the schoolmen, is more to their mind. According to their reading of Aristotle, all his Ethics are subordinated to an end, and in such a system they see a weapon which they can turn to their own purpose of maintaining dogma, no matter at what sacrifice of the individual conscience or reason. This is what the Church of Rome has ever done. She has traded upon the highest instincts of humanity, upon its faith and love, its passionate remorse, its self-abnegation and denial, its imagination and yearning after the unseen. It has based its system

system upon the profoundest truths, and upon this platform it has raised a power which has, whether foreseen by its authors or not, played the part of human tyranny, greed, and cruelty. To support this system it has habitually set itself to suppress knowledge and freedom of thought, before thought had taught itself to grapple with religious subjects, because it foresaw that this would follow. It has, therefore, for the sake of preserving intact its dogma, risked the growth and welfare of humanity, and has, in the eyes of all except those who value this dogma above all other things, constituted itself the enemy of the human race.

"The Church of England," I said, seeing that Mr. Inglesant paused, "is no doubt a compromise, and is powerless to exert its discipline, as the events of the late troubles have shown. It speaks with bated assurance, while the Church of Rome never falters in its utterance, and I confess seems to me to have a logical position. If there be absolute truth revealed, there must be an inspired exponent of it, else from age to age it could not get itself revealed to mankind."

"This is the Papist argument," said Mr. Inglesant; "there is only one answer to it — absolute truth is not revealed. There were certain dangers which Christianity could not, as it would seem, escape. As it brought down the sublimest teaching of Platonism to the humblest understanding, so it was compelled, by this very action, to reduce spiritual and abstract truth to hard and inadequate dogma. As it inculcated a sublime indifference to the things of this life, and a steadfast gaze upon the future, so by this very means it encouraged the growth of a wild, unreasoning superstition. It is easy to draw pictures of martyrs suffering the torture unmoved in the face of a glorious hereafter; but we must acknowledge, unless we choose to call these men absolute fiends, that

that it was these self-same ideas of the future, and its relation to this life, that actuated their tormentors. If these things are true,— if the future of mankind is parceled out between happiness and eternal torture,— then, to insure the safety of mankind at large, the death and torment for a few moments of comparatively few need excite but little regret. From the instant that the founder of Christianity left the earth, perhaps even before, this ghastly specter of superstition ranged itself side by side with the advancing faith. It is confined to no church or sect; it exists in all. Faith in the noble, the unseen, the unselfish, by its very nature encourages this fatal growth; and it is nourished even by those who have sufficient strength to live above it, because, forsooth, its removal may be dangerous to the well-being of society at large — as though anything could be more fatal than falsehood against the Divine Truth."

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the navigator, the naturalist attain their ends by means of law, which is beyond their power to alter, which they cannot change, but with which they can work in harmony, and by so doing produce definite results, so may we. We find ourselves immersed in physical and psychical laws, in accordance with which we act, or from which we diverge. Whether we are free to act or not, we can at least fancy that we resolve. Let us cheat ourselves, if it be a cheat, with this fancy, for we shall find that by so doing we actually attain the end we seek. Virtue, truth, love, are not mere names; they stand for actual qualities, which are well known and recognized among men. These qualities are the elements of an ideal life, of that absolute and perfect life of which our highest culture can catch but a glimpse. As Mr. Hobbes has traced the individual man up to the perfect state, or Civitas, let us work still lower, and trace the individual man from small origins to the position he at present fills. We shall find that he has attained any position of vantage he may occupy by following the laws which our instinct and conscience tell us are divine. Terror and superstition are the invariable enemies of culture and progress. They are used as rods and bogies to frighten the ignorant and the base, but they depress all mankind to the same level of abject slavery. The ways are dark and foul, and the gray years bring a mysterious future which we cannot see. We are like children, or men in a tennis-court, and before our conquest is half-won the dim twilight comes and stops the game; nevertheless, let us keep our places, and above all things hold fast by the law of life we feel within. This was the method which Christ followed, and He won the world by placing Himself in harmony with that law of gradual development which the divine wisdom has planned. Let us follow in His steps and we shall attain to the ideal life, and, without waiting for our 'mortal passage,' tread the free and spacious streets of that Jerusalem which is above."

APPENDIX A.

LETTER FROM THE CARDINAL CARACCIOLI TO POPE INNOCENT XI., WRITTEN FROM NAPLES, JAN. 30, 1682.

Very Holy Father:

If I have any reason to comfort myself and render thanks to God, that many souls confided to my care apply themselves to the holy exercise of mental prayer, the source of every heavenly benediction, I ought not the less to be afflicted by seeing others inconsiderately wandering into dangerous ways. For some time, Very Holy Father, there has been introduced into Naples, and as I learn into other parts of this kingdom, the frequent use of passive prayer, which some call the prayer of pure faith, or of quietude. They affect the name of Quietists, making no meditation nor vocal prayers, but in the actual exercise of prayer holding themselves in perfect repose and silence, as if mute or dead. They pretend to make a prayer purely passive. In effect, they strive to remove from their mind and even from their eyes every subject of meditation, presenting themselves, as they say, to the light and breath of God, which they expect from heaven, without observing any rule or method, and without preparing themselves by any reading or reflection. The masters of the spiritual life are accustomed to propose such aids to beginners, that by reflection on their own defects, on their passions, and on their imperfections

imperfections they may ultimately correct them, but they themselves pretend to lift themselves to the most sublime state of prayer and contemplation, which comes only from the pure goodness of God, who gives it to whom he pleases, and when he pleases — so they visibly deceive themselves, imagining that, without passing through the exercises of a purifying life, they may, by their own strength, open to themselves at once the way of contemplation, without thinking that the ancients and the moderns treating of this matter teach unanimously that passive prayer, or the prayer of quietude, cannot be practiced except by those who have attained to the perfect mortification of their passions and are already far advanced. It is this irregular method of making prayer through which the devil has finally transformed himself into an angel of light, about which I have to make this recital to your Holiness, not without very great horror.

Among them are some who reject vocal prayer entirely, and it has happened that some, long exercised in the prayer of pure faith and of quietude under the lead of these new directors, having subsequently fallen into other hands, have not been able to bring themselves to say the holy rosary, nor even to make the sign of the cross, saying that they could not nor would not do it, nor recite any vocal prayer, because they were dead in the presence of God, and that these exterior acts were of no service. A woman brought up in this practice is always saying, "I am nothing, God is all, and I am in the *abandon*, where you see me, because it so pleases God." She does not wish to confess any more, but daily to take the communion; she obeys no one, and makes no vocal prayer. Yet others, in this prayer of quietude, when the images of the saints and even of our Lord Jesus Christ present themselves to their imagination, they

they hasten to drive them away with a shake of their head, because they say they separate them from God. They pursue this ridiculous and scandalous course even at the public communion, imagining that they ought then to leave Jesus Christ to think only of God. Their blindness is so great that one of them took it into his head one day to throw down a crucifix, because, he says, it prevented him from uniting himself with God, and made him lose the divine presence. They are in the error of believing that all the thoughts which come to them in the silence and in the repose of prayer are so many lights and inspirations from God, and that being in the light of God they are under no law, hence it happens that they believe themselves permitted to do everything without distinction that at such times enters their mind.

These disorders oppress me, who am, however unworthy, the vine-dresser appointed to the culture of this vineyard, and render an exact account of it, with all the respect which I owe to your Holiness, as to the great father of the family, in order that, knowing through your wisdom the poisoned root which produces such growths, he may employ all the strength of his apostolic arm to cut them and tear them out by the very roots; the more so because on this subject opinions are spreading which deserve to be condemned. Since I have been here, a manuscript treating of the prayer of Quietude has been presented to me for permission to print it; it contained so many censurable propositions that I have refused permission and retained the book. I perceive that pens are being prepared on all sides to write some dangerous things. I pray your Holiness to give me such lights and means as you may judge fitting, that I may anticipate the graver scandals with which this city and diocese are threatened.

ened. I cannot prevent myself from also giving your Holiness notice of the usage of daily communion introduced here among even the married laity, who, without exhibiting any progress in spiritual life, as they should do in so frequently approaching the holy table, give, on the contrary, instead of edification, much scandal. Your Holiness cannot ignore what you have ordered in a general decree specially recommending to confessors by whose judgment the daily communion of the laity should be regulated, that in permitting it they should remember above all to make manifest the large preparation and the great purity which the soul should bring to the holy table, and yet experience shows but too plainly that, without any regard to the pious notifications of your Holiness, most of the laity frequent the holy communion daily, of which I feel myself obliged to complain to your Holiness as a manifest abuse, for which I pray you to prescribe a suitable remedy with special instructions, which I shall follow as the guide which ought to lead me safely in the direction of souls. I very humbly kiss the feet of your Holiness.

(Signed)

THE CARDINAL CARACCIOLI.

APPENDIX B.

CIRCULAR LETTER OF CARDINAL CIBO, WRITTEN FROM ROME, FEBRUARY 15, 1687, TO ALL POTENTATES, BISHOPS, AND SUPERIORS OF CHRISTENDOM, BY ORDER OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY OFFICE.

Most Illustrious and Reverend Lord and Brother:

The Sacred Congregation having been advised that in various parts of Italy there are forming or already established schools or companies of associations or brotherhoods under divers names in the churches, oratories, and in private houses, under the pretext of spiritual conference, sometimes of women only, sometimes of men only, and sometimes of both sexes, in which certain directors, without any experience of the ways of God frequented by the Saints, and perhaps even with evil intent, feigning to lead souls to prayer which they call quietude, or pure and interior faith, and other names; although they seem at first by their principle imperfectly understood and in practice very bad, to propose nothing less than the highest perfection of every kind; nevertheless, they insinuate by degrees, into simple minds, very grievous and pernicious errors, which finally end in manifest heresies and shameful abominations, with the irreparable loss of the souls who put themselves under their direction with the sole desire of serving God, which it is only too well known has happened in

system upon the profoundest truths, and upon this platform it has raised a power which has, whether foreseen by its authors or not, played the part of human tyranny, greed, and cruelty. To support this system it has habitually set itself to suppress knowledge and freedom of thought, before thought had taught itself to grapple with religious subjects, because it foresaw that this would follow. It has, therefore, for the sake of preserving intact its dogma, risked the growth and welfare of humanity, and has, in the eyes of all except those who value this dogma above all other things, constituted itself the enemy of the human race.

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"But if absolute truth is not revealed," I said, "how can we know the truth at all?"

"We cannot say how we know it," replied Mr. Inglesant, "but this very ignorance proves that we can know. We are the creatures of this ignorance against which we rebel. From the earliest dawn of existence we have known nothing. How, then, could we question for a moment? What thought should we have other than this ignorance which we had imbibed from our growth, but for the existence of some divine principle, '*Fons veri lucidus*,' within us? The Founder of Christianity said, 'The kingdom of God is within you.' We may not only know the truth, but we may live even in this life in the very household and court of God. We are the creatures of birth, of ancestry, of circumstance; we are surrounded by law, physical and psychical, and the physical very often dominates and rules the soul. As the chemist, the

reflection, provided there was no actual will to scandalize, and it is a great grace of God to be unable to reflect on one's own short-comings.

11. If in doubt whether we are in the right or the wrong way, it is not necessary to reflect.

12. He who has given his free will to God ought to have no further anxiety about anything, neither of hell nor of paradise; he ought not to have a desire of his own perfection, of virtues, of his sanctification, nor of his salvation, of which he ought to purify himself of the hope.

13. After remitting our free will to God, we must also abandon all thought and care of what concerns ourselves. Even the care of doing in ourselves, without ourselves, His divine will.

14. It does not become him who is resigned to the will of God to ask of Him, because to ask is an imperfection, being an act of the personal will and of the personal choice. It is to will that the divine will be conformed to our own; hence this word of the Evangel, "Ask and ye shall receive," was not intended by Jesus Christ for interior souls who have no will. In this way, truly, souls reach the point that they cannot ask anything from God.

15. Even as the soul ought to ask from God nothing, so it ought to thank Him for nothing, both being acts of the personal will.

16. It is not proper to seek indulgences to diminish the penalties due to our sins, because it is better to satisfy divine justice than appeal to the divine mercy — the one springing from the pure love of God, and the other from selfish love of ourselves, and is neither grateful to God nor meritorious, because it is seeking to flee the cross.

17. The

17. The free will being remitted to God with the care and the knowledge of our soul, we need have no more concern about temptations, nor trouble in resisting them, unless negatively and without any other effort. If nature asserts herself let her assert herself — it is but nature.

18. He who in prayer serves himself with images, figures, ideas, or even his own conceptions, does not adore God in spirit and in truth.

19. He who loves God in a way that the reason proves and the understanding conceives that he ought to be loved, does not truly love God.

20. It is ignorance to say that in prayer we should aid ourselves by reasoning and reflections when God does not speak to the soul; God never speaks His speech in His actions, and He acts in the soul whenever it makes no obstacle to His action by its thoughts and its operations.

21. In prayer we should remain in a faith obscure and universal, in quietude, and in forgetfulness of all particular thought, even of the distinctive attributes of God and of the Trinity. We should also remain in the presence of God to adore Him, to love Him, and to serve Him, but without the production of acts, because in them God takes no pleasure.

22. This knowledge by faith is not an act produced by the creature, but it is a knowledge given of God to the creature, which the creature does not know is in him and does not know to have been in him. The same may be said of love.

23. The mystics with St. Bernard distinguish in the scale of the cloisters four degrees — reading, meditation, prayer, and infused contemplation. He who stops always at the first round cannot mount to the second. He who remains continually at the second cannot arrive at the third, which is our acquired

acquired contemplation, in which we must persist through life unless God lifts the soul without any desire on its part up to infused contemplation, which, ceasing, the soul should descend to the third step and there so fix itself that it may not again return either to the second or to the first.

24. Whatever thoughts occur in prayer, even impure ones, or against God and against the saints, the faith, and the sacraments, providing one does not entertain them voluntarily, but only tolerates them with indifference and resignation, do not prevent the prayer of faith; on the contrary, they perfect it, because the soul then remains more resigned to the divine will.

25. Although asleep and altogether insensible, he does not cease to be in prayer and actual contemplation, because prayer and resignation are but the same thing, and while prayer lasts, so long resignation lasts.

26. The distinction of three ways—purificative, illuminative, and unitive—is the absurdest thing which has been said by mystics, for there is but one only way, and that is the interior way.

27. He who desires and stops at sensible devotion neither desires nor seeks God, but himself, and he who walks in the interior way sins in desiring it and in exciting himself in holy places and at solemn festivals.

28. Disgust for spiritual goods is profitable, for it purifies self-love.

29. When an interior soul revolts from intercourse with God or virtue, it is a good sign.

30. All sensibility in the spiritual life is an abomination and nastiness.

31. No contemplative practices the true interior virtues, because they ought not to be recognizable by the senses: it is necessary then to banish the virtues.

32. Before

32. Before or after communion, interior souls do not require any other preparation or actions of grace, than to abide in ordinary passive resignation, because that supplements in a more perfect manner all the acts of virtue which are or can be made in the common way; that if at communion there rises in the soul sentiments of humiliation, of requirement, or of gratitude, they should be suppressed whenever you see they do not come from a special inspiration of God. In other cases they are the emotions of nature which is not yet dead.

33. The soul that is walking in the interior way does wrong to awaken in itself, by any effort at solemn festivals, sentiments of devotion, because all days to the interior soul are alike; all are solemn festivals. I say the same of sacred places, for to it all places are alike.

34. It does not become interior souls to give thanks to God in words and with the tongue, because they should remain silent without opposing any obstacle to the operation of God in them. Thus they find as fast as they resign themselves to God they are less able to recite the Lord's Prayer or Pater Noster.

35. It is not fitting for interior souls to do virtuous actions of their own choice and by their own forces, for then they would not be dead. Nor should they testify love to the Blessed Virgin, the saints, and the humanity of Jesus, because that, being sensible objects, the love of them must be of the same quality.

36. No creature, neither the Blessed Virgin nor the saints, should have a place in our hearts, because God alone wishes to fill and possess it.

37. Under the strongest temptations even, the soul ought not to resist them with explicit acts of opposing virtues, but rest in the aforesaid love and resignation.

38. The

38. The voluntary cross of mortifications is an insupportable burden and without fruit, hence it should be laid aside.

39. The holiest action nor the penances of the saints suffice to efface from the soul the slightest stain.

40. The Holy Virgin has never done a single exterior act, and yet she has been the holiest of all saints. One may, therefore, attain to holiness without exterior acts.

41. God permits and wishes to humiliate us and to conduct us to a perfect transformation, that the devil should do violence to the bodies of some perfected souls which are not possessed, even to the making them to commit animal actions, even while awake and without any mental obfuscation, even to physically moving their hands and other members against their will. The same is to be understood of other actions, bad in themselves, but which are not sinful in this connection, because there has been no consent.

42. These acts of earthly violence may occur at the same time between persons of opposite sexes, and even push them to the accomplishment of a wicked action.

43. In past ages, God made saints by the agency of tyrants, now he makes them by the agency of demons, who, exciting in them these violences, lead them the more to despise and annihilate themselves, and abandon themselves totally to God.

44. Job blasphemed and yet he did not sin, because it was a violence of the demon.

45. St. Paul felt in his body the violences of the demon. Hence he wrote, "The good I would, I do not; the evil I would not, that I do."

46. These violences are more suited to annihilate the soul and conduct it to a perfect union and transformation. Indeed, there is no other way so short and sure.

47. When

47. When these violences occur, we must let Satan act without opposing with any effort or endeavor, but to remain in nothingness, and although there should result illusions of the senses or other brutal acts, or even worse, we should not disquiet ourselves, but put away our scruples, doubts, and fears, because the soul is thereby more enlightened, fortified, and purified, and acquires a holy liberty. Above all, we should avoid confessing. It is well not to accuse ourselves of our acts, because that is the way to subdue the demon and to lay up treasures of peace.

48. Satan, the author of these violences, strives, afterwards, to persuade the soul that they are great sins, in order that we may be disquieted and advance no farther in the interior way. Hence, to render his efforts abortive, it is better not to accuse ourselves, especially as they are not sins, even venial sins.

49. By the violence of the demon, Job was betrayed into strange excesses at the very time that he raised his pure hands to heaven in prayer, as is explained in the sixteenth chapter of his book.

50. David, Jeremiah, and many holy prophets suffered these violences from without in like shameful external actions.

51. There are many examples in the Holy Scripture of these violences in external actions, bad in themselves, as when Samson killed himself with the Philistines, when he married an alien, and sinned with Delilah, things forbidden and sinful; when Judith lied to Holofernes; when Elisha cursed the children; when Eli burned the chiefs of King Ahab, with their troops. One is only in doubt whether this violence came directly from God or from the agency of demons, as happens to other souls.

52. When

52. When these violences, even shameful ones, happen without troubling the mind, then the soul may unite itself to God, as, in fact, it is all the time united.

53. To know in practice of such if any act in other persons proceeds from this violence, the rule which I have is not only derived from the protestations which souls make that they have not assented to these violences, nor that it is impossible that they have sworn falsely that they had not consented, nor that they are souls advanced in the interior way, but I judge rather from an actual light, superior to all human and theological knowledge, which makes me know certainly, with an interior conviction, that such an action comes from violence. Now I am certain that this light comes from God, because it comes to me joined to the conviction that it comes from God, so that it leaves not the least shadow of a doubt to the contrary, just as it happens sometimes that God, revealing something to a soul, he convinces it at the same time that the revelation comes from Him, so that he cannot doubt it.

54. The spiritual, who walk in the common way, will be much confused and deceived at death with all the passions they will have to purify in the other world.

55. By this interior way one succeeds, though with much trouble, in purifying and extinguishing all the passions, so that one no longer feels anything whatever, nothing, nothing, nor does one feel any more inquietude than if the body were dead, nor does the soul experience any more emotio.

56. The two laws and the two lusts, the one of the soul and the other of self-love, subsist so long as self-love subsists; hence, when it is once purified and dead, as happens in the interior way, then also perish the two laws and the two lusts; one falls no more,—one feels nothing any more, not even a venial sin.

57. By

57. By acquired contemplation, one reaches a state in which one commits no more sin, mortal or venial.

58. We reach this state by not reflecting on our acts, because faults come from reflection.

59. The interior way has nothing to do with confession, confessors, cases of conscience, theology, or philosophy.

60. God renders the confession impossible to advanced souls, when they once begin to die to reflections or are already dead to them. He supplies their place with as much preserving grace as they would receive from the sacrament. Hence, in this state, it is not good for souls to frequent the confessional, because it is impossible to them.

61. A soul arrived at the mystic death can wish nothing but what God wishes, because it has no more a will,—God has taken it from him.

62. The interior way conducts, also, to the death of the senses. Besides, an evidence that one is in a state of annihilation, which is mystic death, is that the exterior senses no more represent to us sensible things than if they were not, because they can no longer make the intellect apply itself to them.

63. By the interior way one attains to a fixed state of imperturbable peace.

64. A theologian has less disposition for contemplation than an idiot: first, because he has not a faith as pure; second, he is not so humble; third, he has less anxiety for his salvation; fourth, he has a head full of phantasms, chimeras, opinions, speculations, so that the true light can never enter it.

65. We should obey superiors in exterior things. The vows of obedience only extend to things of this nature, but for the interior it is otherwise. There but God and the Director alone enter.

66. It

66. It is a new doctrine in the Church, and a laughable one, that souls in their interior should be governed by bishops, and that, the bishop being incapable, they should present themselves to him with their director. It is, I say, a new doctrine, since it is not taught either in the Scriptures or by the Councils, in the canons or bulls, or by any saint or author, nor can it be, the Church not judging things concealed, and every soul having the right to choose what seemeth to it good.

67. It is a manifest fraud to say that one is obliged to expose his interior to the exterior forum of superiors, and that it is sinful not to do it, because the Church does not judge things concealed, and souls are prejudiced by these deceptions and dissimulations.

68. There is no faculty nor jurisdiction in the world competent to order the letters of directory of the interiors of souls to be communicated, hence it is well for people to be advised that this is an enterprise of Satan.

The which propositions, in the opinion of our aforesaid brothers, the cardinals of the holy Roman Church and inquisitors general, we have condemned, noted, and effaced as heretical, suspicious, erroneous, scandalous, blasphemous, offensive to pious ears; rash, enervating, destructive of church discipline, and seditious, respectively, and equally so everything which has been published on the subject, oral, written, or printed. We have forbidden each and every one to speak of, in any way write or dispute about the said propositions and others like them, to believe, keep, teach, or practice them. We have deprived the offenders now and forever of all dignities, honors, benefices, and offices, and have declared them unfit to ever hold any; at the same time, we have

have struck them with anathema, from which they can never be delivered, save by us or our successors, the Roman Pontiffs.

Besides, we have forbidden and condemned, for our present decree, all the books and all the works of the said Michel de Molinos, in whatever place or tongue they may be printed; forbidding every person, of whatever degree, profession, or condition, or by whatever title, from daring, under any pretext whatever, in any language, in the same, or in different or equivalent terms, or anonymously or under a feigned or borrowed name, from printing or even reading them, or keeping by him copies, printed or in manuscript, but to carry them immediately to the ordinaries of the place or to the inquisitors against the venom of heresy, under the penalties above stated, with order to the said ordinaries and inquisitors to immediately burn them. Finally, to punish the aforesaid Molinos for his heresies, errors, and shameful deeds by proportionate chastisements, which shall serve as a warning to others, and his correction. Having read all the trial by our said congregation, and heard our very dear sons, the consulters of the Holy Office, doctors in theology and canon laws, with the unanimous vote of our venerable brothers, the cardinals of the holy Roman Church, we have condemned, with all the forms of justice, the said Michel de Molinos as guilty, convicted, and confessed, and, although penitent, as a formal heretic, to the punishment of a narrow and perpetual prison, and to salutary penances, to which he will be held to submit after having made a formal abjuration according to the form which will be prescribed to him; we hereby ordering that on the day and hour indicated, in the Church of Santa Maria de la Minerva, in this city, in presence of all our venerable brothers, the cardinals of the holy Roman Church, prelates of

our

our court, and of all the people who will be invited there by the concession of indulgences, the tenor of the trial will be read, the said Michel de Molinos standing upon the platform. So of the sentence to follow it, and after the said de Molinos, reclothed in a penitential habit, shall have publicly abjured the aforesaid heresies and errors, we have given power to our dear son, the Commissioner of our Holy Office of the Inquisition, to absolve him, in the ordinary forms of the Church, from the censures he had incurred, in full execution of our ordinance of the 3d of September of the current year. And although the aforesaid decree, made by our order, has been printed, published, and posted in public, for the better instruction of the faithful, nevertheless, for fear that the remembrance of this apostolic condemnation should be effaced with the lapse of time, and in order that Christian people instructed in Catholic truth may walk more surely in the way of Catholic truth, following in the steps of the sovereign pontiffs, our predecessors, by our present constitution, we approve anew and confirm the aforesaid decree, and order that it be put into execution, condemning, besides, definitively and reproving the said propositions, the books and manuscripts of the said Michel de Molinos, of which we interdict and forbid the reading, under the same penalties to be inflicted upon the offenders. Ordering, besides, that the present letters shall have force, and shall forever remain in vigor and in full effect, that all ordinary judges and delegates, of whatever authority, shall be bound to judge and determine in conformity with them; all power to judge or interpret them otherwise being taken from each and all of them, hereby declaring null and as not occurring any judgment to the contrary on these matters, from whatever person or authority emanating, knowingly or ignorantly; wishing faith to be given to these presents, when printed,

printed, signed by a notary, and sealed with the seal of a duly authorized ecclesiastical dignitary, as would be due to their originals. Let no one, therefore, permit himself to violate or disregard this our present approbation, confirmation, condemnation, reprobation, punishment, decree, and wish. Let him who shall dare attempt it know that he will call upon himself the indignation of Almighty God and of the blessed apostles Saint Peter and St. Paul.

Given at Rome, at the Saint Mary Majora, the 20th of November, 1687, of the incarnation of our Lord, and the 12th of our pontificate.

(Signed) F. DATAIRE.

J. F. ALBANI,

Register at the Secretariate of Briefs.

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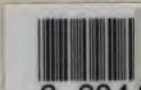
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